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(sixth impression 1940)

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(second impression 1938)

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(first published 1940)

THIS MODERN WORLD

Selected and Edited

by

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The English language is spreading all over the world. This is a condition over which we have no control. It is a substantial imperious fact that entails a vast responsibility and imposes on our humanity the duty to do what we can to make our current speech as good a means as possible for the intercommunication of ideas.

ROBERT BRIDGES

INTRODUCTION

The compiler wishes to express his gratitude to the many distinguished living writers who have allowed him to use their work, and to the executors of great writers lately dead for the privilege of using their work also for this selection.

As a result of this courtesy, the compiler has been able to offer to Intermediate students a more representative selection of the best current English writing than has ever been offered them before.

That it will be agreed that it should be offered to our students the compiler has no doubt. The special virtues of modern English prose, its lucidity, its eagerness to persuade, its extraordinary range of subject-matter, make it ideal material for study in our colleges.

Its technical qualities, clearness and simplicity first among them, would alone make it ideal. But added to that are the other virtues, the vigour of mind and spirit behind it all which are communicated to the reader, and all the wonderful discoveries and visions of this modern world which are nowhere better reflected than in modern English prose.

There is a sound pedagogic view that, while the

teaching of English at the Intermediate stage is best achieved through modern examples, it would be wrong to neglect the great classics of English prose. That view is respected by the compiler, who has exercised the greatest care to choose passages which can be offered safely to the student as models for his own use of English. The guide for the choice has been to take prose that Englishmen regard today as still modern in syntax and organization.

This selection from classical prose is printed last but should be read first. The compiler appeals to teachers to approach the book in this way. The last section is printed chronologically, and may be used in that order, except that the Stevenson, as the more difficult, may be read after the Hudson. The Bennett passage earlier will have been read meantime along with the Lamb. The teacher will choose whether he will take up the stories or the first section. The stories are all easy, but if he prefers the first section, he will probably begin with the Garnett and end with the Bertrand Russell. If he turns to Science next, he will find the last passage on animals easiest and that on bacteria the most difficult. He has now only the delicious essay by Montague left and when he has distilled its fragrance for his students he can safely invite them to reread the whole book as it is printed.

Then the ideas behind the construction of the book will become apparent to the student. After the spadework has been done with his teacher and he reads

the book straight through, he will receive a unified impression of the best that is being thought and said today. When he does so he will have as models the very best of modern English, and in realizing the opportunity of contact with the greatest minds and the best ideas in this century in England he will enter into his inheritance as a reader of English.

L. B.

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LIFE

I. ENGLISH IN THIS MODERN WORLD

BY H. G. WELLS

From *World Brain*

THIS is a broadcast talk delivered on 21 December 1937. The modern world has developed very wonderfully in the last twenty years and the most remarkable progress of all has been made in communications. Road and rail, sea and air traffic have all been improved in comfort and speed to a degree which no one could foresee when you were born. But the most astonishing progress has been in the communication of the human voice by wireless telephony. The whole world can listen personally, almost intimately, to the great men of all countries. So Mr Wells, novelist, historian, scientist and above all and in all his works a social reformer, could sit 'at a brightly lit desk' in a little room in London and people in the United States, in India and Australia could listen as easily and quickly as if they were sitting with him. This, as he says, is 'full of possibilities and full of promise for the hope, the peace, the common understanding of mankind'. There is your reason for studying English thoroughly; for not merely does it enable you to talk to your brothers all over India, it gives you the possibility of becoming a citizen of the world.

I FIND myself on the air for the Empire Broadcasting Service—free to speak for a quarter of an hour on practically any subject that occurs to me—under this

most liberating title of *As I See it*. I suggest that, *As I Think about it*, would have been a better title. What I see is a brightly lit desk, a lamp, a microphone in a pleasantly furnished room—and a listener, for I never talk for broadcasting without a real live listener actually in the room with me. . but *What I am Thinking about* is a great number of listeners, some alone, some in groups, in all sorts of rooms and places, all round the world. We are, I guess, an extremely various and scattered lot indeed, race, religion, colour, age. We have probably only one thing in common. Which is that we speak, write and understand English.

I want to talk about ourselves and the community to which we belong. I see that as a tremendous world brotherhood full of possibilities and full of promise for the hope, the peace, the common understanding of all mankind.

I have been asked by the Empire Broadcasting Service to make this talk, but it is, you must understand, a quite uncontrolled talk or I would not give it. I hold no brief for the Empire as such; it is a complex of political arrangements, which are constantly changing and will continue to change. Widely as it extends, it does not include the larger part of this English-speaking brotherhood of ours, which is to my mind something infinitely more real, more important and more permanent. I am talking reality—not propaganda.

I spent this autumn in the United States. I was

lecturing there about intellectual organization in schools and universities and I talked with all sorts of people—from the President and Mr Henry Ford downward. We all talked the same language, in the same idiom of thought. We understood each other pretty thoroughly. Yet we are drawn from the most diverse sources.

It is a common mistake among English people to suppose that Americans are just English people transplanted. But from the very beginning the United States were of diverse origin. The Swedes, the Dutch, Germans, the French in Louisiana, the Spanish in California, were there as soon as the New Englanders, long before the War of Independence. Afterwards there was an enormous influx of Eastern Europeans. And again in the British Empire itself, there is a great assembly of once alien peoples drawn together into a common interchange—from the Eskimo of the Labrador Coast to the Maori of New Zealand. But the English language has amalgamated—or is amalgamating—all these elements into a great cosmopolis, whose citizens can write to each other, read and understand each other, speak freely and plainly to each other, exchange, acquire and modify ideas with a minimum of difficulty. Once or twice before in history there has been such a synthesis in the Latin-speaking world, in the Semitic-speaking world, but never on such a vast scale as in this English-speaking world in which we live and think today. And English has never been forced upon these

multitudes who speak it now, they were never subdued to it or humiliated by it, they have taken it up freely and they use it of their own goodwill because it serves them best.

Now a thing that impresses me greatly, it seems to me one of the most important things in our present world, is that this English-speaking community is not breaking up and does not look like breaking up, into different languages. In the past that sort of thing *did* occur. Latin, as you know, broke up into French, Italian, Castilian, Catalan and a multitude of minor dialects. But since then a vast change has occurred in the conditions of human life, the forces of separation have been dwindling, the forces that bring us nearer to one another have been increasing enormously, the printed word, books, newspapers, the talking movie, the radio, increasing travel, increasing trade, now forbid dispersal. History has gone into reverse. Instead of being scattered about the earth and forgetting one another, a thing which happened to the Aryan speakers and the Mongolian speakers of the past, we English speakers are being drawn together and learning more and more about each other. This reversal of the old order of things has been going on ever since the steamship and the railways appeared, a century ago. It goes on faster and faster. In the past new dialects were continually appearing; *now* dialects are disappearing. The curse of Babel has been lifted from over three

hundred million people. This coming together is a new thing in human experience.

And having got this unprecedented instrument of thought spread all about the world, a net of understanding, what are we English speakers doing with it to get the best out of it? Are we getting the best out of it? Are we growing into one mighty community of ideas and sympathies and help and peace as rapidly as we might do? I do not think we are. Something, I admit, is being done to realize the tremendous opportunity of the world-wide spreading of the English language, but nothing like what might be done, if we grasped our possibilities to the full.

Let me tell you as briefly as I can one or two of the things that might be done to make this great gift of a common language better worth while. They are things every one of us in this talk tonight can set about demanding at once. You can write to your representative or member of parliament about them before you go to bed.

First about books. Nothing can pull our minds together as powerfully as books. We all want to read books according to our interests and habits. We find them so dear to buy or so difficult to borrow that most of us cannot read half of the books we hear about. And three-quarters of what books there are, we never hear about at all. This is true even here in London. Here I am on the telephone to well-stored book shops and all sorts of people from whom I can get advice. Even so

it is true here. But a majority of my listeners tonight may be living in parts of the Empire far away from the centres of book distribution. Mentally many of them must suffer the torments of Tantalus. They perceive there is a great and refreshing flood of ideas, imaginative, informative matter, fantasy, poetical invention flowing through the English world and they can get only just a splash or so of it to their thirsty lips. In Great Britain in the larger towns you can buy a fair selection of the best books published, even quite new books, for from sixpence to a shilling. But in America there are no really cheap books and the great mass of the workers and poor people there, never read books at all. There are public libraries, of course, where you can wait for books for quite a long time. Most of our 300,000,000 English speakers, through no fault of their own, read nothing better than a few odd books that chance to come their way. They never acquire the habit of systematic book reading. English, which should be the key of all human thought and knowledge, is for them the key to a non-existent door.

The reading, thinking section, the book-reading section, of the Empire probably does not number a million all told. The rest either read newspapers or do not read at all.

Now before you blame the public or the schools or the booksellers for this immense illiteracy, this great mental underdevelopment, consider the difficulties of sending books about. Try sending a book, a good fat

book, half-way round the world and see what it costs you. You will realize that a special low postal rate for books and parcels of books, a special preference rate, a rate to *encourage* the sending of books, is one of the first things necessary before we can begin to realize the full cultural promise of our widespread English tongue. It is a matter that should concern every Ministry of Education. Does it?

Given such rates you'll soon find every publisher in the world building bigger printing plants and selling books for sixpence—almost as soon as they are issued.

But book postage is not considered a public service. It is made a source of revenue and until people like ourselves who read and listen in and want to know begin to make a fuss about it, matters will remain very much as they are.

Cheap good books—and next comes the problem of how to hear of them—so that we may—from the ends of the earth—order the ones we really want and spend our sixpences properly. Well, probably half my hearers have never heard of what is called documentation, and they think bibliography is something remote and scholastic and all that sort of thing. But really it is nothing more or less than indexing all that has been written in the world, so that you can find out quickly and surely what has been done, by whom, and under what title. Don't you want to know that? And do you know it? There are hundreds of clever people working out methods of indexing and in a little while it will be

quite possible to print and keep up-to-date bibliographies, lists of all the best books, in every great group of subjects in the world. It would be as easy to keep up such bibliography as it is to keep up the issue of railway time-tables. The cost of producing these book guides need not be very much greater than the cost of producing those time-tables. I doubt if today a hundred thousand of us use any bibliographies at all. What is the good of reading unless you know what books to read? Bibliographies ought to lie about in every educated household

And another thing which we English speakers have a right to ask for, considering what a vast multitude we are and all that we might be, and that is a general summary of contemporary knowledge and ideas, a real modern, adequate Encyclopaedia, kept up to date and available for the use of any one. That would hold us all together as nothing else would do. We should all be of a mind and nothing on earth would have the strength to stand against our thinking. But is there anything of the sort? No. The latest Encyclopaedia in my study is dated 1929—eight years old—and it is a very imperfect performance at that. Very old-fashioned. Very little better than the Encyclopaedias of a hundred years ago. Discovery and invention have been going on vigorously for the past eight years—but how am I to learn quickly about that new stuff? There is not a sign of a new one in sight. Does any one care—any of our education departments? Not a rap. The French

just now—in spite of threats of war, in spite of great financial difficulties are making a new and a very admirably planned Encyclopaedia. You may think an Encyclopaedia is something only rich people can afford to buy. It ought not to be. If you can afford a radio set—if you can afford a motor car, surely you can afford a summary of human thought and knowledge. Encyclopaedias need not be as dear as they are, any more than books or bibliographies. Cheaper books, handy bibliographies, a great encyclopaedia, our English-speaking world needs all these things. When automobiles first came along, they seemed likely to become a rich man's monopoly. They cost upwards of £1,000. Henry Ford altered all that. He put the poor man on the road. We want a Henry Ford today to modernize the distribution of knowledge, make good knowledge cheap and easy in this still very ignorant, ill-educated, ill-served English-speaking world of ours. Which might be the greatest power on earth for the consolidation of humanity and the establishing of an enduring creative Pax for all mankind.

My quarter of an hour is at an end. I haven't said half of what I would like to say. But if I have made you a little discontented with what we are doing with this precious inheritance of ours—English, I shall not have used this bit of time in vain.

II. A MODERN PARLIAMENT AT WORK

By A. P. HERBERT

From *The Aye's Have It*

HERE is a glimpse of the Mother of Parliaments at work. Famous as a humorist, Mr Herbert, before being elected to represent the University of Oxford in Parliament, did most of his reforming work through his humorous novels and articles. But as soon as he was elected he set about getting reform in the laws concerning divorce. Quite astonishingly, he was successful. What follows gives the beginning of the story. We see the House of Commons at work and we see how it works. It is a brilliantly drawn picture of the House of Commons.

Just before Parliament met I had a long midnight talk, after a dinner at Oxford, with the late Sir Austen Chamberlain. That great and lovable man had been kind to me for many years, and I delighted to listen to his discourses over the port at Grillion's Club. Twice I persuaded him into the Café Royal, where his apparition astonished the Bohemians; but he was not the least lively person there, and on the second occasion, a 'late' night, he was the last to leave.

Now, with an admiring audience of undergraduates, warmly and wisely he advised me, especially on that gnawing problem—how soon to make the Maiden

Speech? The very thought of it is formidable, and there is an equal temptation to 'get it over' prematurely and to postpone it pusillanimously. Sir Austen's advice was 'Wait. Don't be in a hurry. Sit in the House, and absorb the atmosphere. See the kind of thing that can be said and mustn't be said. And study procedure. This Parliament should last for four or five years. There's plenty of time.'

This is the advice of all the Old Hands; and they are right. The House of Commons is a place like no other place:¹ it can truly be understood from the inside only. And it is always best to see how the field is placed before one begins to lash the bowling.

'Wait. Study procedure.' These two golden lessons, then, with every good intention, I took to Westminster. And I promptly disobeyed the first.

But that was partly because I obeyed the second. I got from the Vote Office on the first day the Manual of Procedure, and the Standing Orders, and I borrowed Sir Erskine May's great tome, and I read for miles and miles. I don't think I learned very much and most of it, in the books, is most confusing. But I did grasp one important point. It is very little known or understood outside Parliament and I commend it to the close attention of the reader, especially if he is inclined to complain that his Member 'doesn't seem to *do* very much'.

¹ 'A more terrible audience there is not in the world.'—Lord Macaulay.

The chief business of Parliament is still finance. It is the Government's job to extract money from the people for the purpose of the King's Government and it is Parliament's job to see that they do not extract too much or spend it unwisely. Any time left over may be devoted to legislation. but most of the rules are designed not to assist legislation but to retard it. Governments in these days are always bursting with legislation themselves: and the time in which private Members may propose legislation is small. Besides, the Government as a rule dislike private Members' legislation, because they will drag up awkward questions which had best be left alone; and there is generally the Report of a Royal Commission behind them.

But still the private Members are allowed to play at legislation on a few Fridays at the beginning of the Session. There is great competition on those days; they have to be balloted for; and I, for one, never win anything in a ballot

The private Member has other opportunities of raising questions and making fusses. He can—again, if he is successful in the ballot—put down vague resolutions for discussion on the first few Wednesdays of the Session: and I believe that, many years ago, divorce reform was discussed in that way. Also, on any motion for the adjournment of the House, at eleven o'clock any evening, or on the Christmas, Easter or Whitsun adjournments, he can raise a question and abuse the Government on any matter of *administration*. But—

and this is the vital point—in these miscellaneous debates he must not discuss anything that will ‘involve legislation’. That is, Bobby, he may say, ‘I wish the Government would keep the King’s Proctor, or the B. B. C., or the village postman, in order’: but he cannot say, ‘I wish the Government would bring in a measure of Divorce Reform’.

I am not complaining of this rule; it is probably sound. But it is the most effective of all the muzzles on the would-be law-reformer in Parliament: and eager law-reformers outside should know about it. Many of them, as I know to my sorrow, do not.

Now this muzzle is not applied during the three or four days’ debate on the Address (‘The Loyal Address to His Majesty in response to the Gracious Speech from the Throne’). In this debate you may deal with almost any subject under the sun, on the ground that it ought to have been mentioned in the gracious but, as far as you are concerned, contemptible speech from the Throne. You may regret that His Majesty’s Government will propose no legislation for the institution of polygamy, the abolition of wasps, the reform of the weather, or anything else. It is almost impossible to be out of order on the Address: and I believe that the Speaker and Deputy Speaker go almost frantic with boredom.

Unfortunately, nearly all my pet schemes ‘involve legislation’, and from my study of May and the Manual I came to the conclusion that in all probability my only

opportunity during the whole Session of mentioning Divorce, Licensing or Betting Reform would be in the debate on the Address. For they could not be mentioned in any of the free-for-all debates on the adjournment; there was fixed in my mind (and nothing has happened to remove it) the conviction that I should never 'win a turkey' in any ballot: and they were matters far too complex and controversial for the Ten-minute Rule. And though I was by no means itching to address the House of Commons, I did want to say a word or two about divorce in my first session.

Accordingly, with trepidation and regret, I decided to go against the advice of Sir Austen Chamberlain, whom I loved, and speak on the Address.

I carefully prepared a speech. It might, I think, have been a good speech: at least, it was likely to be kindly received, for the House is very kind to maiden speeches. After the startling victory at Oxford I had been most generously greeted by Members: and I think they wished me to do well. There was goodwill and, perhaps, some expectation.

And I did my best to ruin everything.

On the first day, December 3, the Prime Minister, Mr Baldwin, made an announcement concerning private Members' time.

'There is only one effective Friday before Christmas for the second reading of private Members' Bills. The Government consider that, as the House has met so soon after the General Election and so near to

Christmas, it will be more convenient to Members, and will give them more time to think out suitable Bills, if we postpone the ballot until we meet in the New Year. I have caused conversations to take place through the usual channels ' (i.e., the Whips) ' and the Patronage Secretary ' (Chief Whip) ' tells me that the Opposition and the Opposition Liberals have no objection in this course The necessary motion to carry this into effect will be taken tomorrow '

Not an unreasonable proposal, as I know now. A private Member may know very well what he wants to do : but he may be a very long way from getting it drafted in proper Parliamentary form. But then, in my study at home, I had a divorce Bill, printed and ready, so far as I knew, for discussion—the Bill which for years Mr Holford Knight had been vainly presenting to the Commons.

So when I heard that benevolent little phrase about Members requiring ' more time to think out suitable Bills ' a little red light shone somewhere, and the Hammersmith Hampden in me began to bubble. ' Think out ' indeed (I fancy those were the fatal words) when a Royal Commission had thought everything out nearly twenty-five years earlier ! Really ! If no one else had a Bill ready for this Friday, why should not this long-neglected reform be discussed upon it ? Then, I had gathered already in conversation with friends that private Members' time was not very highly valued ; and many thought that it was a waste of time. This,

perhaps, was the beginning of a new assault upon it.

I had already written to the Speaker asking if I might speak on the Address: but late that night, in bed, I determined that I would make an ass of myself and, instead of speaking on the Address, oppose the Prime Minister's motion the next day.

I could make a much better story if I pretended that I knew many things that I know now. It is possible to make a good strategic defence for this rash act; and some kind friends have been kind enough to make it. The rules of Parliamentary procedure have one chief purpose, to prevent people talking too much. The tact and cunning of the Government Whips are mainly directed towards the same end, to prevent people talking too much, especially when the Government do not want people to talk at all. The free-lance, therefore, who wants to talk more than authority desires must make his own opportunities: and he must use for that purpose the very procedure which is designed to muzzle him. I wanted to talk about divorce on the Friday in question: the Government were proposing a motion to prevent me from talking about divorce: this, then, was my opportunity to talk about divorce, and I took it.

So, I believe, some friendly experts said later. And it is all quite sound, provided always that the practitioner is an experienced and popular Parliamentarian, and not a novice making his maiden speech. I cannot claim that there was so much clear thought in my own mind.

But I did, I know, say to myself that it would be better, though much more dangerous, to direct my remarks to a practical point, which fell, so to speak, within my special 'department'—free speech, independence, private Members' rights, and so on—than to make a vaguely genial speech about nothing in particular on the Address. I saw the dangers clearly enough—or some of them. On the one hand the danger that threatens any one who does anything in these days, if he does no more than cross the road quicker than the next man—'seeking publicity': and, on the other hand, the technical, physical dangers. I was terrified of the House. I thought that I might break down, 'dry up' (it is one of my favourite nightmares). But what might be forgiven to a new Member shyly making his maiden speech in the ordinary way, might be irrevocable ruin, I knew, to a new Member impudently setting himself against the Prime Minister on his second day in Parliament.

But I decided. In the morning I went to the Library at the House and looked up some point in *Hansard*—I forget what. and I scribbled down some rough notes on the back of an old copy of the Matrimonial Causes Bill, which I had secured some time before from the Divorce Law Reform Union (or the Marriage Law Reform League).

Then I walked east along the Embankment, denouncing His Majesty's Government to the River Thames; for it was Wednesday, the day of the weekly

Punch lunch, at which Editor and staff arrange the cartoons. I had to excuse myself about half-way through the first cartoon, and I walked along the Embankment again, still trying audibly to get my oration clear in my head, for the preparation had been much more scrappy than I like. Near the Temple, intent on declamation, I charged into my friend Sir Campbell Stewart, and I am glad to remember that I was able to laugh at myself as heartily as he did.

Now the appalling moment was near. I sent a note to the Speaker, to say what I intended. Then I took my seat on the front bench below the gangway, on the Government side. Still I asked nobody's aid—what an ass! But after Questions Mr William Mabane, the Member for Huddersfield, happened to sit down two places from me. I had known him for some years; and on the first day he had kindly given me lunch and shown me some of the ropes, with two other new Members. So now I leaned over, told him what I was going to do, and asked him what he thought about some technical detail—not—what an ass!—whether he thought it was a wise thing to do. He was alarmed, I could see, because he was my friend and knew, better than I did, how rash a deed I had in mind. But, what was greatly to his credit, as I shall always think, he wasted no time in argument, but acted. He said, 'Well, if you must do it, you must have Jimmy with you.' He crossed the gangway and spoke to Mr James

Maxton, who sat just opposite with his three members of the Independent Labour Party.

Jimmy Maxton is always ready to strike a blow for independence, especially if it may hit the Government. He came across and had a word with me, and said that he would start the shindy. This was heartening: I was more frightened than ever, but nothing would make me give up. A friend on the bench behind me, I think Colonel Sandeman-Allen, urged me to abandon my plan for my own sake. And at the moment a messenger at the Bar was trying to attract my attention. Mabane saw him and brought me a message from the Speaker's Secretary, trying kindly to save me from myself, and saying that if I did this thing, I should lose my chance of making an effective maiden speech. Not that, but the thought of the Speaker himself taking this trouble for me, shook me for a moment. But the devil was in me, Mr Baldwin was up, and I was lamentably set for battle.

The Prime Minister 'begged to move':

'That until the Adjournment of the House for Christmas, Government business do have precedence on Fridays; and that no Bills, other than Government Bills, be introduced and that no ballot be taken for determining the precedence of such Bills.'

He was very brief. He said that 'in practice only one Friday would be affected by the motion'. (This, as Mr Maxton pointed out later, was not strictly accurate:

for since no Bills could be presented before Christmas, no Bills could be printed. And therefore, no Bills being ready, the first Friday after Christmas was forfeited to the Government also.) He concluded :

‘ There is no intention on the part of the Government, unless something quite unforeseen occurs, to interfere at all in the course of this Session with the usual regulations for the conduct of private Members’ business.’

Mr Attlee, for the Labour Party, still more briefly assented to the motion.

Then Jimmy Maxton rose. I do not think that, till he heard of my intention, he and his little band had intended to make a fuss. They enjoy making a fuss, of course, especially if they can attack the official Opposition as well as the Government : but I think (in the main) he was nobly coming to the aid of a new and rash Independent. He has the enviable faculty of rising at any moment and speaking eloquently about anything : and with his rich voice, delightful humour, his cascade of hair and deep, burning eyes, he is one of the most fascinating speakers in the House. I was grateful indeed for such assistance, and I began to realize how mad I had been to think of declaring such a war single-handed, without seeking the assistance of anyone.

Maxton said :

‘ I do not agree that it is a good practice to take even one or two private Members’ Fridays and to postpone the ballot for Bills until after we return from the

Christmas holidays. It would have been possible to take the ballot for Bills during the period between now and Christmas, and then those Members who had secured the right to introduce Bills, having intimated the Titles of their Bills, could, during the period of the Recess, have prepared those Bills. Thus we could have started right off with those Bills after the Christmas Recess. This motion means that at least one, or, at the maximum, three private Members' Bills are going to lose their chance as against the procedure of having the ballot and intimating the Titles of the Bills during this part of the Session and proceeding directly with them on the first Friday after the Recess.'

All this, I believe, was sound sense: and shows, I hope, that I was not barking up an entirely imaginary tree.

He went on :

'I should not be particularly hot about this question because the chance of either myself or any of my hon. friends here getting the right to introduce one of these Bills is, I think, on a calculation of the chances, about 150 to 1 against. Therefore I am not going to be unduly excited about the matter, but I know that the Prime Minister made a similar statement in the last Parliament to that which we have heard today, and then came back here after the Christmas Recess and moved that the whole time of private Members be taken by the Government. I know, too, from speeches he has made here that he does not hold private Members' time in very

high regard. In this house he has expressed a somewhat contemptuous view of the use made by private Members of such time as is available to them. It may be true that much of the private Members' time is not very well used. On the other hand, valuable measures have reached the Statute Book through the medium of private Members' Bills. I think private Members ought to be very jealous in safeguarding every minute of the little time that is available to them. I suggest that the Prime Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury should re-write this proposal with a view, at least, to having the ballot before we adjourn for Christmas . . . I ask the Prime Minister, therefore, to reconsider his motion and to hold the ballot before we adjourn.'

With this stout encouragement, the Junior Burgess for Oxford University rose, in a mist of apprehension. As I gazed at the Speaker and waited for him to call my name I thought what a raving fool he must consider me for going against his wise advice. Now I was off . and from that moment I did not see a human face until I came out of the strange incredible dream. No one who has not made a maiden speech in the House of Commons (except perhaps an actor) can imagine that ordeal. It is bad enough, I suppose, in the ordinary case, when the New Boy modestly intervenes in an ordinary debate, asks for the usual indulgence of the House, and attempts no more than to say a few things which will neither annoy nor bore

Even then he may drop his notes, address the Speaker as 'Ladies and Gentlemen', speak of 'Mr Baldwin' instead of the 'Prime Minister', or 'dry up' utterly and have to sit down. But all these perils were ten times magnified for me, a New Boy wantonly thrusting himself in where only the most experienced could safely tread, assailing a motion of the Prime Minister in his first speech, which by custom should be one long demand for indulgence. It was dangerous enough to complete such a speech: if I had broken down it would, I think, have been the end of me. The House was packed, for it was early in the day. Never, I suppose, shall I address so full a House again: indeed, I hope not. And never shall I speak with such assurance. Afterwards Mr Churchill praised my 'composure' and 'aplomb': I have never felt composed in that place since. But that day, it is true, once I was off, I had no fears. I felt utterly alone, but cool and certain, whirling along in a wild dream of my own, which I, for once, was controlling. But I did perceive soon how wise were those Old Hands who had said that the House of Commons was like no other place. This audience, unlike the well-refreshed diners I had known, rarely laughed when I wanted it to laugh, and they laughed when I least expected it, than which there is nothing more disconcerting. It was this, I think, which made me say more about the Bill itself than I intended, for I was goaded into retorting and shaken out of my stride. It was this, I

suppose, that dragged from me that impious vow, for I cannot believe that that was in my head when I began. Always afterwards it made me hot to remember it, and even now, when it has been fulfilled, I almost blush to write it down, I hardly believe that I can have said it. But there it is in Hansard (Column 135, Vol. 307, No. 5)

‘ . . . I have in my hand a Bill which I am ready to introduce next Friday, or on the Friday after, or on all the Fridays, until it is passed into law, and I swear that it shall be passed before this Parliament is over.’
(*Laughter*)

Then indeed the Members did right to laugh. For surely no more deplorable boast had ever been heard beneath that roof. Disraeli said, I believe, that the time would come when they *would* hear him: he did not undertake that a particular measure should be passed into law.

I sat down in a sad silence Sir Archibald Sinclair was kind, but, committed ‘through the usual channels’, was bound to accept the motion. George Buchanan, Mr Maxton’s eloquent lieutenant, supported us in principle and detail, and, as usual, enjoyed the chance to flick the Labour Party as well as the Government. Miss Eleanor Rathbone (another Independent University Member) said that she too had a Bill ready, the Family Inheritance Bill, which had long been knocking at the door. It is still.

The I. L. P. challenged a division and provided the

tellers, and we had a very small party in the 'No' Lobby—Ayes, 232. Noes, 5. Mr Garro Jones and Miss Rathbone voted with us. So that in my first division I was banded with the republicans and rebels against His Majesty's Government—a queer beginning for Oxford University.

As I was going back into the Chamber I met Mr Winston Churchill in the Members' Lobby. He took me away and marched me up and down the corridor outside the Library; and I shall never forget how kind and encouraging he was. He had been talking to the Front Bench, he said, and had found few good words for me there, at which I do not wonder. It was like his warm and generous nature to seek out and comfort the hunted stag. He began with some too high compliments, which I will not repeat; and passed to some well-merited and sound advice. He said, I remember, which is of more general interest, that it was right for a young Member to make his own openings upon points of procedure: and it was right too on such questions to vote as one spoke. (Something severe had been said, I gathered, about my going into the Lobby with 'those fellows'—the I. L. P.).

The House of Commons is the most generous assembly of men, and will forgive almost anything except a mean spirit. Austen Chamberlain seemed to have forgotten that he had ever given me certain wise advice. In every quarter I felt that I was being let off very lightly, and I was grateful.

III MODERN INDIA

BY ALDOUS HUXLEY

From Jestling Pilate

INDIA seems to fascinate writers from all over the world more than any other country: and it should be of great service to have so many varied opinions when reforms are so eagerly being suggested. Here are two passages by a very talented visitor from England. The first is an appreciation of some Indian scientific work, and the second a summing up of his feelings after a long tour of India. It was written in 1925 and wonderful work has been done since then. But there is much for you to do in your turn, till travellers from the other side of the world no longer feel the abiding sadness over India

CALCUTTA

THE experimenter's is a curious and special talent. Armed with a tea canister and some wire, with silk, a little sealing-wax, and two or three jam-pots, Faraday marched forth against the mysterious powers of electricity. He returned in triumph with their captured secrets. It was just a question of suitably juxtaposing the wax, the glass jars, the wires. The mysterious powers couldn't help surrendering. So simple—if you happened to be Faraday.

If you happened to be Sir J. C. Bose, it would be so simple, with a little clockwork, some needles and filaments, to devise machines that would make visible the growth of plants, the pulse of their vegetable ' hearts ', the twitching of their nerves, the process of their digestion. It would be so simple—though it cost even Bose long years of labour to perfect his instruments.

At the Bose Institute in Calcutta, the great experimenter himself was our guide. Through all an afternoon we followed him from marvel to marvel. Ardently and with an enthusiasm, with a copiousness of ideas that were almost too much for his powers of expression and left him impatiently stammering with the effort to elucidate methods, appraise results, unfold implications, he expounded them one by one. We watched the growth of a plant being traced out automatically by a needle on a sheet of smoked glass; we saw its sudden, shuddering reaction to an electric shock. We watched a plant feeding; in the process it was exhaling minute quantities of oxygen. Each time the accumulation of exhaled oxygen reached a certain amount, a little bell, like the bell that warns you when you are nearly at the end of your line of typewriting, automatically rang. When the sun shone on the plant, the bell rang often and regularly. Shaded, the plant stopped feeding, the bell rang only at long intervals, or not at all. A drop of stimulant added to the water in which the plant was standing set the

bell wildly tinkling, as though some record-breaking typist were at the machine. Near it—for the plant was feeding out of doors—stood a large tree. Sir J. C. Bose told us that it had been brought to the garden from a distance. Transplanting is generally fatal to a full-grown tree; it dies of shock. So would most men if their arms and legs were amputated without an anaesthetic. Bose administered chloroform. The operation was completely successful. Waking, the anaesthetized tree immediately took root in its new place and flourished.

But an overdose of chloroform is as fatal to a plant as to a man. In one of the laboratories we were shown the instrument which records the beating of a plant's 'heart'. By a system of levers, similar in principle to that with which the self-recording barometer has made us familiar, but enormously more delicate and sensitive, the minute pulsations which occur in the layer of tissue immediately beneath the outer rind of the stem, are magnified—literally millions of times—and recorded automatically in a dotted graph on a moving sheet of smoked glass. Bose's instruments have made visible things that it has been hitherto impossible to see, even with the aid of the most powerful microscope. The normal vegetable 'heart beat', as we saw it recording itself point by point on the moving plate, is very slow. It must take the best part of a minute for the pulsating tissue to pass from maximum contraction to maximum expansion. But a grain of

caffeine or of camphor affects the heart of an animal. The stimulant was added to the plant's water, and almost immediately the undulations of the graph lengthened out under our eyes and, at the same time, came closer together: the pulse of the plant's 'heart' had become more violent and more rapid. After the pick-me-up we administered poison. A mortal dose of chloroform was dropped into the water. The graph became the record of a death agony. As the poison paralysed the 'heart', the ups and downs of the graph flattened out into a horizontal line half-way between the extremes of undulation. But so long as any life remained in the plant, this medial line did not run level, but was jagged with sharp irregular ups and downs that represented in a visible symbol the spasms of a murdered creature desperately struggling for life. After a little while, there were no more ups and downs. The line of dots were quite straight. The plant was dead.

The spectacle of a dying animal affects us painfully; we can see its struggles and, sympathetically, feel something of its pain. The unseen agony of a plant leaves us indifferent. To a being with eyes a million times more sensitive than ours, the struggles of a dying plant would be more visible and therefore distressing. Bose's instrument endows us with this more than microscopical acuteness of vision. The poisoned flower manifestly writhes before us. The last moments are so distressingly like those of a man, that we are shocked

by the newly revealed spectacle of them into a hitherto unfelt sympathy.

ON THE HOOGLY

THE ship slides down the Hoogly, between the mud-banks and the palms. Every now and then we pass a village, a huge white jute mill. Above the flat plain of the delta the sky is enormous and peopled with majestic clouds. After these months lived under perpetually flawless blue, the spectacle of clouds is a delight and a refreshment. I understand, now, the inspiration of those Mogul paintings, which represent princesses and great lords looking at the clouds. A dry season in India makes one long for a break in the monotony of too perfect weather. Cloud-gazing, when at last the approaching rains render it possible, must be a most delicious pastime, particularly when combined (as the Moguls in the paintings combine it) with dalliance, the sipping of *sherbet*, and the slow deliberate smoking of an enormous hubble-bubble.

These clouds are messengers from the world that lies beyond the borders of India; my pleasure at seeing them is symbolical. For, to tell the truth, I am glad to be leaving India. I have met old friends in India, and made new friends; I have seen many delightful and interesting things, much beauty, much that is strange, much that is grotesque and comical. But all the same I am glad to be going away. The reasons are purely selfish. What the eye does not see, the heart

does not grieve over. It is because I do not desire to grieve that I am glad to be going. For India is depressing as no other country I have ever known. One breathes in it, not air, but dust and hopelessness. The present is unsatisfactory, the future dubious and menacing. The forces of the West have been in occupation for upwards of a century and a half. And yet five generations of peace and settled government have made the country, as a whole, no more prosperous than it was in days of anarchy; according to some authorities, such as Digby, they have made it much poorer. Millions, at any rate, are still admittedly without enough to eat, all their lives. Custom and ancient superstition are still almost as strong as they ever were, and after a century and a half of Western government, nine Indians out of ten cannot read or write, and the tenth, who can, detests the Europeans who taught them. The educated and politically conscious profess democratic principles; but their instincts are profoundly and almost ineradicably aristocratic. They desire, theoretically, to see the country 'progressing' in the Western sense of the term, but the practical ambition of most of them is to secure a quiet job without responsibilities or risks.

Meanwhile the mountains of unnecessary labour, of evitable hardship and superfluous suffering, are piled up, patiently, higher and ever higher. Millions upon millions are born and painfully live—to what end? God knows, it is hard enough to find a reason anywhere,

West or East. But in India there is no conceivable answer to the question, at any rate in terms of the present existence.

The ship goes sliding down-stream. Tomorrow we shall be at sea.

IV LEARNING TO FLY

BY DAVID GARNETT

From *The Grasshoppers Come* and *A Rabbit in the Air*

IN this modern world, which is rapidly becoming 'air-minded', it is interesting to read an account of the most difficult stage in learning to fly. A selection of modern prose with this title would not be complete without something on aeroplanes. Much has already been written; about the use of aeroplanes in peace, and terrible accounts of the use of the aeroplane in war. The conquest of the air is one of the most notable mechanical achievements in the modern world; and as such it is part of the story of that development of communications which is making the great world so small and intimate. This quiet account of the emotions and sensations of the learner is told with such skill and humour, that the reader feels that he himself is in the machine, learning to fly.

FIRST SOLO

Wednesday, July 22nd

I WENT to the aerodrome rather early, determined to fly well. Marshall was just taking a man for his first lesson. When that was over I pulled on my helmet and I lifted the tail of the machine round and taxied out. On my first landing I felt Marshall putting the

stick back a fraction of a second before I should have done, and this annoyed me. Next time round I did a bad landing. 'Engine, engine,' came through the tube and I sighed and cursed, opened the throttle, but not quite fully. Marshall pushed it wide, and I saw that I had disgraced myself already. The next landing was not perfect, but I insisted that it would do, and brought her down gently from the bounce while Marshall gave a faint flick of engine.

'That would have been all right,' he said. 'But last time . . .'

I am bored with repentance by this time. 'I ought to be shot,' I said. Round once more. All this time my approaches were perfection. This time I did a lovely landing. Before we taxied back for the run Marshall said. 'Well, it's only the throttle now.'

'I'll let you go solo now if you'll be responsible for any damage to the machine through being lazy with the throttle.'

'What might that run me into?' I asked.

'Well it's not likely that you'll do more than a hundred pounds' worth of damage.'

It suddenly dawned on me that Marshall's request was the queerest thing I had ever heard of between teacher and pupil. I was overcome by stony anger with him and said. 'All right, I'll pay a hundred pounds, but that's the limit.'

'Well, will you taxi her back?'

While I turned the machine and taxied back, I did

not think either of my coming solo flight or of the likelihood of smashing the machine or of hurting myself. I thought only that Marshall had behaved as I should never have expected, and that I had got to score off him. However, when I pulled up he lifted the tail round and, coming to the edge of the cockpit, said in a very friendly and charming way: 'You are absolutely O.K., but must get it into your head that if you're not sure of your approach or your landing, you will go round again. Don't think that you have got to get down the first time round. You can take as long as you like. You have got three hours' petrol supply there.'

'What difference will not having your weight make to me?''

'You'll overshoot. Perhaps the first two times you'll find you've overshot, and then you'll put on engine and go round again.'

He stood back and I opened the throttle a trifle and bumped across the grass to the best position, turned into the wind, and at once pushed the throttle wide open and put the tail up

'Has he left any junk lying about in the front cockpit that might jam the controls?' I wondered as I raced across. The take-off was all right, but the climb was disappointing. Marshall's absence made no difference that I could see. I throttled back the engine and gave myself just a little extra height before I turned, making my circuit a trifle larger and giving

myself a little more margin in case of engine failure. I turned over the cement works, flew her level, and turned again by the river, throttled down and made my approach.

‘ You are all alone up here, you bloody fool,’ I said to myself on the circuit, but the fact really left me quite indifferent. I did not notice Marshall’s absence and all I knew was that I must score off him by making a good landing. If I brooded on anything, it was on that he should have said anything so extraordinary. ‘ The machine must be insured. However, I can’t think about that now.’

Lord God! I was too high. I mustn’t get too close in. I sauntered down on a slow glide until I was abreast of the hangars, looking over the left hand side, then I turned her, watching the A.S.I. and keeping the speed absolutely constant, and sauntered back again. I was just right as I turned in. No, I had undershot a trifle. No matter. I shall just do it nicely. I’ve plenty in hand really. Here comes the hedge: here comes the white clover. Flatten out gently. She’s dropping. Stick back a little. Hold on now. Hold on. Right back. Right back. A gentle scrape sounded loud in my ears. The skid scraped the machine to rest.

‘ What’s the damage?’ I wondered. How much has my vanity cost me?’ Then, to my astonishment, I realized that I hadn’t smashed up the machine after all. But of course I ought to have gone round again.

I turned the machine and taxied in. Marshall and Honour were standing together watching. Marshall waved and came running up smiling.

‘ Well that was rotten,’ I said ‘ I came in too low, I came in too slow, and I suppose that I ought to have gone round again.’

‘ It was perfect It was a perfect approach and a very good landing. It would have been a crime to have gone round again. It was one of the best first solos I’ve ever seen The only thing is that you taxied in rather fast just now.’

I got out.

‘ I hope you feel happier. You know, I’ve never said that to anyone before. It’s the first time I have played that trick on anyone, but I had to make you feel serious. I had to make sure you wouldn’t do a lazy landing ’ I realized that he was referring to me paying for the damage. It had been a trick ! All my indignation was wasted. But even then it was too soon to feel grateful to him. But I was in too happy a state of mind to do anything more than grin and book some more times.

Most people, went on Marshall, receive their instruction and go off solo with the ordinary routine course, but here and there one runs up against a pupil who gets into a groove, although everything else may be perfect. Take your case . everything was absolutely all right, nine out of ten landings perfect, but if you struck

the tenth and it was a bad one, I was uncertain whether you would give engine or not

But the strangest case of all was one of the best pupils I have ever had right from the first lesson, but he could not get enough confidence in himself for the first solo, until at last I felt something really drastic would have to be done. I arranged for him to have some instruction one morning at 8 o'clock and overnight asked Honour to put a second joy-stick in the front cockpit, loose. At 8 o'clock next morning we had two or three circuits and I explained that he was absolutely all right for his first solo. However, he was not anxious to go. 'All right,' I said, 'I shall go with you, but we will remove the dual control.' After much protesting on his part we taxied over to the hangars and I handed out the second stick, which had been hidden in the front cockpit overnight, and we proceeded to take off. I felt he had all the experience of a first solo, I could feel his feet shaking slightly on the rudder-bar. We came round and turned into land and I could see that the first effort at any rate was going to be a bad one. We bounced, I dared not touch my stick to correct it otherwise the whole show would have been given away, I yelled instructions down the tube and he seemed suddenly to wake up and realize that it was up to him to do something. On the third attempt he made a perfect landing, and we proceeded in this fashion for another half-hour. Next morning

at 8 o'clock we went on with this performance and the same procedure was adopted until the third morning he was sent off solo. He has turned out a very good pilot.

Half-way home, I asked myself alone in the supercilious voice which has so often been used to me.

'Have you gone solo yet?' 'Yes.'

'Have you gone solo?' 'YES'

'Have you gone solo?' 'YES'

I drove fast and the wind blew my vainglory out of my mouth. But what had happened was a secret—a precious secret, and I did not mention it to Ray until she asked, half-way through dinner, how I had got on during my flying lesson

SECOND SOLO

Monday, July 27th

ALL day there was a fresh, even a blustering wind with intervals when sunshine struck hot between the shoulder-blades before the black clouds came up to plunge us in darkness, or fall in driving rain. I looked out of my window, bitterly regretful. tricky winds come just as I need good weather for solo flights

When I reached the aerodrome it was pouring in torrents and YZ stood disconsolately in the wet, while Marshall and a pupil were waiting in the hangar for the rain to stop so they could go up and do spins.

Yet when it was time for me to go up the wind had dropped, the scene was golden in the declining sun

and everything seemed a perfect summer evening, when swallows hawk low after flies and the sound of willow bat on ball comes occasionally from the green. I began going round with Marshall and did some good and some bad landings, but always opened the throttle and flew off if there was the least doubt. And it was on such occasions that he seemed really pleased with me.

'Taxi me back. The long grass will soak me through.'

Directly I had left him and had turned up wind, I opened the throttle and flew off. Certainly the machine climbed faster without his weight. As I gained height, my mind was busy with possible places to come down on. Then on the circuit, the beauty of the evening made me forget my responsibilities and I looked about with a light heart at the sunlit fields and the distant hills and fens, until it was time to glide in.

The odd thing is that I do not hear the engine now except as a continuous pouring like the unheard sound of falling water near a weir. The great thing on the glide is to set the cheese-cutter exactly right, so that the machine glides almost hands off between 60 and 70. If it is set wrong, one is more liable to glide too slow or too fast. Full of last-minute anxieties, I made a perfect landing, then taxied back and looked at Marshall who waved me to go on. I flew round again, still in the golden sunlight, with the engine bubbling on, looking at the dark clouds which were building themselves high up for another storm.

This time I thought I was too low as I crossed the trees, and afraid of coming in too slow, gave a touch of engine. I was coming in nicely. . . . No, I had overshoot. I flew off and suddenly the whole brilliantly-lit earth beneath me turned black and became almost invisible. The black clouds were higher, the storm nearer. Should I get down before it broke in sheets of blinding spurting rain, driven by the onslaught of the gnashing furies of wind which would tear off my wings and hurl me down? Should I? No, my landing was bad again: the same story of nervous overshooting. Here comes the storm! I must hurry. The engine's note was no longer the peaceful rush of water, but the frenzied drumming of a suffocating man beating his knuckles upon the iron wall of the bulkhead in which he is held prisoner. But this time I made a good approach—a trifle too fast—a trifle too low—clearing the trees and the hedge nicely. Then, hold on, hold on, flatten a little, let the machine lose speed, hold the wheels off the ground, now, stick right back. All was perfect as I scraped and slid along.

I taxied back very slowly and felt the strain on my arms and nerves relax. Marshall took the wing and slewed the machine round. I switched off. Fifteen minutes solo. Quite good. The storm did not break after all, and I drove home enjoying the contented purr of the Ford engine, feeling very relaxed.

V. HAPPINESS IN THIS MODERN WORLD

BY BERTRAND RUSSELL

From Sceptical Essays

THIS passage shows how plain and clear prose can be on a difficult subject when a really great mind is manipulating the material. The writer argues clearly and not quite dispassionately that the Chinese have a better way of life than westerners. That may be so, but it is only fair to say that he puts Chinese conduct in the best light and then puts against it the poor average of western conduct. It is really an attack on his own people, and it is good to attack one's own people before any others. And when improvement is suggested, as in this essay, such attacks are useful. Here, at any rate, is superb prose by one of the greatest masters of English prose in this century.

EVERYBODY knows Wells's Time Machine, which enabled its possessor to travel backwards or forwards in time, and see for himself what the past was like and what the future will be. But people do not always realize that a great deal of the advantages of Wells's device can be secured by travelling about the world at the present day. A European who goes to New York or Chicago sees the future, the future to which Europe is likely to come if it escapes economic disaster.² On the other hand, when he goes to Asia he

sees the past. In India, I am told, he can see the Middle Ages, in China he can see the eighteenth century. If George Washington were to return to earth, the country which he created would puzzle him dreadfully. He would feel a little less strange in England, still less strange in France; but he would not feel really at home until he reached China. There, for the first time in his ghostly wanderings, he would find men who still believe in 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness', and who conceive these things more or less as Americans of the War of Independence conceived them. And I think it would not be long before he became President of the Chinese Republic.

Western civilization embraces North and South America, Europe including Russia, and the British self-governing dominions. In this civilization the United States leads the van; all the characteristics that distinguish the West from the East are most marked and farthest developed in America. We are accustomed to take progress for granted; to assume without hesitation that the changes which have happened during the last hundred years were unquestionably for the better, and that further changes for the better are sure to follow indefinitely. On the Continent of Europe, the War and its consequences have administered a blow to this confident belief, and men have begun to look back to the time before 1914 as a golden age, not likely to recur for centuries. In England there has been much less of this shock to optimism, and in America still

less. For those of us who have been accustomed to take progress for granted, it is especially interesting to visit a country like China, which has remained where we were one hundred and fifty years ago, and to ask ourselves whether, on the balance, the changes which have happened to us have brought any real improvement.

The civilization of China, as everyone knows, is based upon the teaching of Confucius, who flourished five hundred years before Christ. Like the Greeks and the Romans, he did not think of human society as naturally progressive; on the contrary, he believed that in remote antiquity rulers had been wise, and the people had been happy to a degree which the degenerate present could admire but hardly achieve. This, of course, was a delusion. But the practical result was that Confucius, like other teachers of antiquity, aimed at creating a stable society, maintaining a certain level of excellence, but not always striving after new successes. In this he was more successful than any other man who ever lived. His personality has been stamped on Chinese civilization from his day to our own. During his lifetime the Chinese occupied only a small part of present-day China, and were divided into a number of warring states. During the next three hundred years they established themselves throughout what is now China proper, and founded an empire exceeding in territory and population any other that

existed until the last fifty years. In spite of barbarian invasions, Mongol and Manchu dynasties, and occasional longer or shorter periods of chaos and civil war, the Confucian system survived, bringing with it art and literature and a civilized way of life. It is only in our own day, through contact with the West and with the westernized Japanese, that this system has begun to break down.

A system which has had this extraordinary power of survival must have great merits, and certainly deserves our respect and consideration. It is not a religion, as we understand the word, because it is not associated with the supernatural or with mystical beliefs. It is a purely ethical system, but its ethics, unlike those of Christianity, are not too exalted for ordinary men to practise. In essence, what Confucius teaches is something very like the old-fashioned ideal of a 'gentleman' as it existed in the eighteenth century. One of his sayings will illustrate this (I quote from Lionel Giles's *Sayings of Confucius*)

The true gentleman is never contentious. If a spirit of rivalry is anywhere unavoidable, it is at a shooting-match. Yet even here he courteously salutes his opponents before taking up his position, and again when, having lost, he retires to drink the forfeit-cup. So that even when competing he remains a true gentleman

He speaks much, as a moral teacher is bound to do, about duty and virtue and such matters, but he never

exacts anything contrary to nature and the natural affections. This is shown in the following conversation :

The Duke of She addressed Confucius saying: We have an upright man in our country. His father stole a sheep, and the son bore witness against him. In our country, Confucius replied, uprightness is something different from this. A father hides the guilt of his son, and a son hides the guilt of his father. It is in such conduct that true uprightness is to be found.

Confucius was in all things moderate, even in virtue. He did not believe that we ought to return good for evil. He was asked on one occasion: 'How do you regard the principle of returning good for evil?' And he replied. 'What, then, is to be the return for good? Rather should you return justice for injustice, and good for good.' The principle of returning good for evil was being taught in his day in China by the Taoists, whose teaching is much more akin to that of Christianity than is the teaching of Confucius. The founder of Taoism, Lao-Tze (supposed to have been an older contemporary of Confucius), says: 'To the good I would be good, to the not-good I would also be good, in order to make them good. With the faithful I would keep faith, with the unfaithful I would also keep faith, in order that they may become faithful. Even if a man is bad, how can it be right to cast him off? Requite injury with kindness' Some of Lao-Tze's

words are amazingly like parts of the Sermon on the Mount. For instance, he says

He that humbles himself shall be preserved entire.
He that bends shall be made straight. He that is empty shall be filled. He that is worn out shall be renewed. He who has little shall succeed. He who has much shall go astray.

It is characteristic of China that it was not Lao-Tze but Confucius who became the recognized national sage. Taoism has survived, but chiefly as magic and among the uneducated. Its doctrines have appeared visionary to the practical men who administered the Empire, while the doctrines of Confucius were eminently calculated to avoid friction. Lao-Tze preached a doctrine of inaction. 'The empire', he says, 'has ever been won by letting things take their course. He who must always be doing is unfit to obtain the empire.' But Chinese governors naturally preferred the Confucian maxims of self-control, benevolence, and courtesy, combined, as they were, with a great emphasis upon the good that could be done by wise government. It never occurred to the Chinese, as it has to all modern white nations, to have one system of ethics in theory and another in practice. I do not mean that they always live up to their own theories, but that they attempt to do so and are expected to do so, whereas there are large parts of the Christian ethic which are universally admitted to be too good for this wicked world.

We have, in fact, two kinds of morality side by side : one which we preach but do not practise, and another which we practise but seldom preach. Christianity, like all religions except Mormonism, is Asiatic in origin ; it had in the early centuries that emphasis on individualism and other-worldliness which is characteristic of Asiatic mysticism. From this point of view, the doctrine of non-resistance was intelligible. But when Christianity became the nominal religion of energetic European princes, it was found necessary to maintain that some texts were not to be taken literally, while others, such as ' render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's ', acquired great popularity. In our own day, under the influence of competitive industrialism, the slightest approach to non-resistance is despised, and men are expected to be able to keep their end up. In practice, our effective morality is that of material success achieved by means of a struggle ; and this applies to nations as well as to individuals. Anything else seems to us soft and foolish

The Chinese do not adopt either our theoretical or our practical ethic. They admit in theory that there are occasions when it is proper to fight, and in practice that these occasions are rare ; whereas we hold in theory that there are no occasions when it is proper to fight and in practice that such occasions are very frequent. The Chinese sometimes fight, but are not a combative race, and do not greatly admire success in war or in business. Traditionally, they admire learning more

than anything else, next to that, and usually in combination with it, they admire urbanity and courtesy. For ages past, administrative posts have been awarded in China on results of competitive examinations. As there has been no hereditary aristocracy for two thousand years—with the sole exception of the family of Confucius, the head of which is a Duke—learning has drawn to itself the kind of respect which, in feudal Europe, was given to powerful nobles, as well as the respect which it inspired on its own account. The old learning, however, was very narrow, consisting merely in an uncritical study of the Chinese classics and their recognized commentators. Under the influence of the West, it has come to be known that geography, economics, geology, chemistry and so on, are of more practical use than the moralizings of former ages. Young China—that is to say, the students who have been educated on European lines—recognize modern needs, and have perhaps hardly enough respect for the old tradition. Nevertheless, even the most modern, with few exceptions, retain the traditional virtues of moderation, politeness, and a pacific temper. Whether these virtues will survive a few more decades of western and Japanese tuition is perhaps doubtful.

If I were to try to sum up in a phrase the main difference between the Chinese and ourselves, I should say that they, in the main, aim at enjoyment, while we, in the main, aim at power. We like power over our fellow-men, and we like power over Nature. For the

sake of the former we have built up strong states, and for the sake of the latter we have built up Science. The Chinese are too lazy and too good-natured for such pursuits. To say that they are lazy is, however, only true in a certain sense. They are not lazy in the way that Russians are, that is to say, they will work hard for their living. Employers of labour find them extraordinarily industrious. But they will not work, as the Americans and Western Europeans do, simply because they would be bored if they did not work, nor do they love hustle for its own sake. When they have enough to live on, they live on it, instead of trying to augment it by hard work. They have an infinite capacity for leisurely amusements—going to the theatre, talking while they drink tea, admiring the Chinese art of earlier times, or walking in beautiful scenery. To our way of thinking, there is something unduly mild about such a way of spending one's life, we respect more a man who goes to his office every day, even if all that he does in his office is harmful!

Living in the East has, perhaps, a corrupting influence upon a white man, but I confess that, since I came to know China, I have regarded laziness as one of the best qualities of which men in the mass are capable. We achieve certain things by being energetic, but it may be questioned whether, on the balance, the things that we achieve are of any value. We develop wonderful skill in manufacture, part of which we devote to making ships, automobiles, telephones, and the other

means of living luxuriously at high pressure, while another part is devoted to making guns, poison gases, and aeroplanes for the purpose of killing each other wholesale. We have a first-class system of administration and taxation, part of which is devoted to education, sanitation, and such useful objects, while the rest is devoted to war. In England at the present day most of the national revenue is spent on past and future wars and only the residue on useful objects. On the Continent, in most countries, the proportion is even worse. We have a police system of unexampled efficiency, part of which is devoted to the detection and prevention of crime and part to imprisoning anybody who has any new constructive political ideas. In China, until recently, they had none of these things. Industry was too inefficient to produce either automobiles or bombs; the state too inefficient to educate its own citizens or to kill those of other countries, the police too inefficient to catch either bandits or Bolsheviks. The result was that in China, as compared to any white man's country, there was freedom for all, and a degree of diffused happiness which was amazing in view of the poverty of all but a tiny minority.

Comparing the actual outlook of the average Chinese with that of the average Western, two differences strike one. first, that the Chinese do not admire activity unless it serves some useful purpose, secondly, that they do not regard morality as consisting in checking our own

impulses and interfering with those of others. The first of these differences has been already discussed, but the second is perhaps equally important.

Among ourselves, the people who are regarded as moral luminaries are those who forgo ordinary pleasures themselves and find compensation in interfering with the pleasures of others. There is an element of the busybody in our conception of virtue: unless a man makes himself a nuisance to a great many people, we do not think he can be an exceptionally good man. This attitude comes from our notion of Sin. It leads not only to interference with freedom, but also to hypocrisy, since the conventional standard is too difficult for most people to live up to. In China this is not the case. Moral precepts are positive rather than negative. A man is expected to be respectful to his parents, kind to his children, generous to his poor relations, and courteous to all. These are not very difficult duties, but most men actually fulfil them, and the result is perhaps better than that of our higher standard, from which most people fall short.

Another result of the absence of the notion of Sin is that men are much more willing to submit their differences to argument and reason than they are in the West. Among ourselves, differences of opinion quickly become questions of 'principle' each side thinks that the other side is wicked, and that any yielding to it involves sharing in its guilt. This makes our disputes bitter, and involves in practice a great readiness to

appeal to force. In China, although there were military men who were ready to appeal to force, no one took them seriously, not even their own soldiers. They fought battles which were nearly bloodless, and they did much less harm than we should expect from our experience of the fiercer conflicts of the West. The great bulk of the population, including the civil administration, went about its business as though these generals and their armies did not exist. In ordinary life, disputes are usually adjusted by the friendly mediation of some third party. Compromise is the accepted principle, because it is necessary to save the face of both parties. Saving face, though in some forms it makes foreigners smile, is a most valuable national institution, making social and political life far less ruthless than it is with us.

There is one serious defect, and only one, in the Chinese system, and that is, that it does not enable China to resist more pugnacious nations. If the whole world were like China, the whole world could be happy, but so long as others are warlike and energetic, the Chinese, now that they are no longer isolated, will be compelled to copy our vices to some degree if they are to preserve their national independence. But let us not flatter ourselves that this imitation will be an improvement.

LITERATURE

VI. ABOUT READING

BY ARNOLD BENNETT

From *Literary Taste*

BEFORE reading this you should turn to Lamb's sketch 'Dream Children' printed later in this book. In that framework of one long paragraph words and sentences are built to make one of the most delicate visions in English prose. After reading and enjoying it you will turn back with pleasure to this appreciation of it by one of the great writers of the earlier decades of this century. Mr Bennett was primarily a novelist, at his best a great novelist, but he wrote in many kinds and this passage is at once a very practical guide to reading an essay and a finely sympathetic interpretation of Lamb's masterpiece.

LET us begin experimental reading with Charles Lamb. I choose Lamb for various reasons. He is a great writer, wide in his appeal, of a highly sympathetic temperament, and his finest achievements are simple and very short. Moreover, he may usefully lead to other and more complex matters, as will appear later. Now, your natural tendency will be to think of Charles Lamb as a book, because he has arrived at the stage of being a classic. Charles Lamb was a man, not a book. It is extremely important that the beginner in literary study should always form an idea of the

man behind the book. The book is nothing but the expression of the man. The book is nothing but the man trying to talk to you, trying to impart to you some of his feelings. An experienced student will divine the man from the book, will understand the man by the book, as is, of course, logically proper. But the beginner will do well to aid himself in understanding the book by means of independent information about the man. He will thus at once relate the book to something human, and strengthen in his mind the essential notion of the connexion between literature and life. The earliest literature was delivered orally direct by the artist to the recipient. In some respects this arrangement was ideal. Changes in the constitution of society have rendered it impossible. Nevertheless, we can still, by the exercise of the imagination, hear mentally the accents of the artist speaking to us. We must so exercise our imagination as to feel the man behind the book.

Some biographical information about Lamb should be acquired. There are excellent short biographies of him by Canon Ainger in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, in Chambers's *Encyclopaedia*, and in Chambers's *Cyclopaedia of English Literature*. If you have none of these (but you ought to have the last), there are Mr E. V. Lucas's exhaustive *Life* (Methuen, 21s) and, cheaper, Mr Orlo Williams's *Charles Lamb* (Duckworth, 2s.); also introductory studies prefixed to various editions of Lamb's works. Indeed, the facilities

for collecting materials for a picture of Charles Lamb as a human being are prodigious. When you have made for yourself such a picture, read the *Essays of Elia* by the light of it. I will choose one of the most celebrated, *Dream Children : A Reverie*. At this point, kindly put my book down, and read *Dream Children*. Do not say to yourself that you will read it later, but read it now. When you have read it, you may proceed to my next paragraph.

You are to consider *Dream Children* as a human document. Lamb was nearing fifty when he wrote it. You can see, especially from the last line, that the death of his elder brother, John Lamb, was fresh and heavy on his mind. You will recollect that in youth he had had a disappointing love-affair with a girl named Ann Simmons, who afterwards married a man named Bartrum. You will know that one of the influences of his childhood was his grandmother Field, housekeeper of Blakesware House, in Hertfordshire, at which mansion he sometimes spent his holidays. You will know that he was a bachelor, living with his sister Mary, who was subject to homicidal mania. And you will see in this essay, primarily, a supreme expression of the increasing loneliness of his life. He constructed all that preliminary tableau of paternal pleasure in order to bring home to you in the most poignant way his feeling of the solitude of his existence, his sense of all that he had missed and lost in the world. The key of the essay is one of profound sadness. But note that

he makes his sadness beautiful; or, rather, he shows the beauty that resides in sadness. You watch him sitting there in his 'bachelor armchair', and you say to yourself: 'Yes, it was sad, but it was somehow beautiful.' When you have said that to yourself, Charles Lamb, so far as you are concerned, has accomplished his chief aim in writing the essay. How exactly he produces his effect can never be fully explained. But one reason of his success is certainly his regard for truth. He does not falsely idealize his brother, nor the relations between them. He does not say, as a sentimentalist would have said, 'Not the slightest cloud ever darkened our relations'; nor does he exaggerate his solitude. Being a sane man, he has too much common sense to assemble all his woes at once. He might have told you that Bridget was a homicidal maniac; what he does tell you is that she was faithful. Another reason of his success is his continual regard for beautiful things and fine actions, as illustrated in the major characteristics of his grandmother and his brother, and in the detailed description of Blakesware House and the gardens thereof.

Then, subordinate to the main purpose, part of the machinery of the main purpose, is the picture of the children—real children until the moment when they fade away. The traits of childhood are accurately and humorously put in again and again. 'Here John smiled, as much as to say, "That would be foolish indeed"' 'Here little Alice spread her hands.'

‘ Here Alice’s little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted ’
‘ Here John expanded all his eyebrows, and tried to look courageous ’ ‘ Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes ’ ‘ Here the children fell a-crying . . . and prayed me to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother.’ And the exquisite :

Here Alice put out one of her dear mother’s looks, too tender to be upbraiding.’ Incidentally, while preparing his ultimate solemn effect, Lamb has inspired you with a new, intensified vision of the wistful beauty of children—their imitativeness, their facile and generous emotions, their anxiety to be correct, their ingenuous haste to escape from grief into joy. You can see these children almost as clearly and as tenderly as Lamb saw them. For days afterwards you will not be able to look upon a child without recalling Lamb’s portrayal of the grace of childhood. He will have shared with you his perception of beauty. If you possess children, he will have renewed for you the charm which custom does very decidedly stale. It is further to be noticed that the measure of his success in picturing the children is the measure of his success in his main effect. The more real they seem, the more touching is the revelation of the fact that they do not exist, and never have existed. And if you were moved by the reference to their ‘ pretty dead mother ’, you will be still more moved when you learn that the girl

who would have been their mother is not dead and is not Lamb's.

As, having read the essay, you reflect upon it, you will see how its emotional power over you has sprung from the sincere and unexaggerated expression of actual emotions exactly remembered by someone who had an eye always open for beauty, who was, indeed, obsessed by beauty. The beauty of old houses and gardens and aged virtuous characters, the beauty of children, the beauty of companionships, the softening beauty of dreams in an arm-chair—all these are brought together and mingled with the grief and regret which were the origin of the mood. Why is *Dream Children* a classic? It is a classic because it transmits to you, as to generations before you, distinguished emotion, because it makes you respond to the throb of life more intensely, more justly, and more nobly. And it is capable of doing this because Charles Lamb had a very distinguished, a very sensitive, and a very honest mind. His emotions were noble. He felt so keenly that he was obliged to find relief in imparting his emotions. And his mental processes were so sincere that he could neither exaggerate nor diminish the truth. If he had lacked any one of these three qualities, his appeal would have been narrowed and weakened, and he would not have become a classic. Either his feelings would have been deficient in supreme beauty, and therefore less worthy to be imparted, or he would not have had sufficient force to impart them; or his honesty would

not have been equal to the strain of imparting them accurately. In any case, he would not have set up in you that vibration which we call pleasure, and which is super-eminentlly caused by vitalizing participation in high emotion. As Lamb sat in his bachelor arm-chair, with his brother in the grave, and the faithful homicidal maniac by his side, he really did think to himself, ' This is beautiful. Sorrow is beautiful. Disappointment is beautiful. Life is beautiful. *I must tell them. I must make them understand.*' Because he still makes you understand he is a classic

VII. ABOUT WRITING

BY C E. MONTAGUE

From A Writer's Notes on His Trade

AMONG literary people C E. Montague is one of the most admired writers of the last generation. He was a very honest man and the pretences in public life worried him so much that he waged endless war on them in his journalism, in his literary criticism and in his novels. We may not be in a position to wage war like him but as good citizens we should always be on our guard against pretences. This passage will help us to do so. More positively, it will help us to be clear and exact in our thinking and speaking and writing.

THREE WAYS OF SAYING THINGS

IN the innocence of second childhood Mr Justice Shallow said to Ancient Pistol: 'If, sir, you come with news from the court, I take it there's but two ways—either to utter them or to conceal them.' That, as other children say, was all that Shallow knew. For of uttering them alone, there are three ways, apart from all the ways of concealing them. At any rate there are three ways of trying to make them attractive when uttered. You may state them about twice as big as they are, or about half as big as they are, or if you have skill and

complete confidence in your skill, you may state them only just as big as they are

Of these three standard sauces for dishes of news or opinion the most widely used is the first. Its manufacture and sale yield a living to most of the world's party journalists—and not to the duffers only but to some of the most capable and readable. You open the *London Morning Post*, still a well-written paper, though somewhat battered by fate, and find this vivacious reflection on Mr Lloyd George at the end of his war Premiership. 'He left, not this party or that, but every political party, every respectable voter and, indeed, every thinking man the world over, sick to the soul of "Lloyd Georgeism" and all that it implied.' You see—'every' political party—even his own special band of leal dervishes. And 'every' respectable voter—even that churchwarden neighbour of yours who never would hear a word against Lloyd George, the 'man who won the war'. And 'every' thinking man, 'the world over', sick 'to the soul'—every pensive farmer in the rural wilds of Spain, every meditative friar in a rock monastery in Tibet—all, all convulsed by the one nauseating vision of Mr Lloyd George!

You may laugh. You may feel morally sure that no mere contemporary man, not even Mr Charles Chaplin, has ever occupied the mind of every-thinking man on this globe; that no universal turning of the spiritual stomach has ever been effected, even by emetics as powerful as Horatio Bottomley. And yet the author

of that fantasia knew what he was doing. Even you yourself, with your Greek liking for moderation, are a little tickled with the fancy that history would at any rate be amusing if it were really like that. And to many loyal fellow-partisans of the writer—even to those who see how fantastic it is—it somehow gives just what they had wanted. It ‘ gets there ’, as they would say. They feel better after reading it.

After all it is the natural or the chosen method of the finest pamphleteer now writing in English. ‘ Nine out of every ten clergymen have no religious convictions ’; the medical profession is ‘ a conspiracy to exploit popular credulity and human suffering ’, ‘ the smattering of science that all—even doctors—pick up from the ordinary newspapers nowadays only makes the doctor more dangerous than he used to be ’. If you look at each passage by itself, all that you can say is ‘ What rubbish! ’ Yet, in their completion, the Prefaces of Mr Bernard Shaw, whence they come, can scarcely have been beaten, for dynamic effect on people’s minds, by anything since Huxley’s lance-breaking in defence of Evolution. In fact they have done much to turn the laugh against some forms of mean delusion and cowardice. By bringing in this Beelzebub of enormous thousand-fold exaggeration he has routed out some quite sizeable devils. Or, like a rifleman, he has found that to point a rifle quite straight at a distant target on a windy day is not the way to hit it.

In this he keeps good company. To interest people in his contention that there was a lot of bad work going on in the Rome of his time, Juvenal makes out that the whole place was only fit to be put into an incinerator or towed out to sea and sunk. To give an arresting flavour to his remarks on some human deficiencies, Swift, through the King of Brobdingnag, puts it no lower than that the bulk of mankind are 'the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth'. Almost every Leader of an Opposition, however talented, says of almost every big Government Bill which he has to oppose, that it is the most monstrous hash of crude and undigested proposals which he remembers in a long Parliamentary experience. A gifted Labour member who wants to say effectively that a new Pensions Bill should confer still more than it does on the pensioners, says that it is the most brutal insult ever flung in the face of the poor.

Nobody, speaker or hearer, thinks of believing these flourishes. Nobody would look up the previous hashes and insults referred to, so as to test the soundness of the eloquent person's comparison. No one imagines them sound. It is all a form, a flourish, a figure of speech, and yet somehow it does serve a purpose, if only to convey a vague impression of robust and salutaryrenchancy. To minds jaded with debauches of overemphasis it does contrive to give a thrill. It bites, as liquor three times as potent as whisky might amuse

for the moment a palate which has lost the power to be tickled by the common whisky of this world.

An alternative sauce for assertion is hearty and spirited understatement. 'Not 'arf', says the Cockney, when wishful to say that a thing is an ample whole. 'The time has been', says Macbeth, 'that, when the brains were out, the man would die, and there an end.' The British schoolboy has no terms of praise more emphatic than 'Pretty decent', unless it be 'Good enough'. To spring, in his audience, a vivid sense of the extreme barrenness of the Sahara, a British statesman describes it as 'very light soil'. To a woman bawling abuse from the door of an inn Charles Lamb imputes certain 'murmurs, not very indistinctly or ambiguously pronounced'. America does herself equal justice. She it was that first called the Atlantic 'the herring-pond' and 'the drink', and Noah's Flood 'the big rain', and said that a rattlesnake's bite would 'do you no good at all'. The Greeks had a recognized name for this ruse of saying much less than you mean, in the hope that your hearer's mind will make good even more than the large percentage of discount which you have deducted from the truth—cunning fellow, casting your bread on the waters, under the form of a kind of rebate, in sure and certain hope that it will return to you buttered.

Aristotle has warned us that when a great many people are found to believe in a thing, it is rash to

think that you can just pooh-pooh it as bunkum, 'and there an end', as Macbeth might have said. So when the children, the illiterate adults and the best writers of two hemispheres, in our time, agree with classical antiquity in deeming a figure of speech to be worth frequent use, that figure of speech is no cipher. To that, as Stevenson's wise pirate says, you can lay.

Is it that others, besides lovers, find things more piquant when they are presented in miniature? Or is the proper analogy to be found on the Stock Exchange? When we float some bubble statement are we likely to secure a bigger rush of subscriptions from the credulous by putting our stock on the market amazingly much below par? Little I know—only that all but a few whimsical persons seem to be urged, by some instinct of style, either to overstate things by 100 per cent or to understate them by 50 per cent, in order to make the statement tell better. The simple, unspoilt boy reports a certain dullness in a friend by calling him a 'gibbering maniac'. The simple, unspoilt Irish peasant merely says of an actual, a certified village idiot that 'he's as apt to do one thing as another'. Both only want to accentuate what they say—to give it a savour, like the best authors. Horses used to shy, says Mr Kipling, when one of his characters smiled. Some other standard author would have tried to get the same effect by saying that the man was not exactly an Apollo.

There is yet a third sauce, but it takes canny cooking.

Straight and narrow is the path, and few shall walk therein.

The most rousing preacher in Oxford, a generation ago, was Benjamin Jowett. He never, as some preachers did, put it to two hundred healthy young men, as a quite likely thing, that they might die in the next night and have to give God, about breakfast time, an account of their stewardships. Neither did he suggest, as other preachers did, that they were all going to live to be threescore and ten. What he said was, 'I find it set down in tables that the average duration of human life, at the age of twenty-one, is about thirty-six years. We may hope for a little more; we may fear a little less; but, speaking generally, thirty-six years, or about 13,000 days is the time in which our task must be accomplished'. For myself and some others, at least, I can certify this our young minds were as electrified by this quaint piece of precision, so unexpected from a pulpit, that they were instantly opened wide for the reception of what followed—that we should be shabby fellows if we spent any serious proportion of our 13,000 days in shirking or whining or sponging on the more manful part of mankind.

The late Lord Morley of Blackburn spoke once of 'the irony of absolutely literal statement', and he used to practise a kind of Quakerish finesse of accuracy, with a lively relish of its surprising and amusing flavour for the palates of readers surfeited

with the common bawling and bungling, the wild overstatements and wild understatements of public dispute. It is true that this means of persuasion depends for a good deal of its force on the presence of a certain background. Anything stated with complete calmness and fastidious precision in the midst of a heated controversy has almost the effect of a satiric epigram. It gains, for your mind, an odd distinctness and authority; it has a cunning touch of flattery; it seems to summon you away from the company of these brawling fellows and to bid you use the brains with which it does you the honour of crediting you. If ever the supply of headlong overstaters and understaters should run short, the effectiveness of literalism might undoubtedly languish. 'It's blokes like me', the brawlers may say to the literalists, as the burglar said to the judge of Assize, 'that keeps blokes like you'. But of that loss of a favourable environment there seems to be no immediate danger.

SCIENCE

VIII. ABOUT BACTERIA

BY J. G. CROWTHER

From An Outline of the Universe

OUR forefathers had their fairy stories, and we have ours. For surely the wonders of science seem to us like fairy stories, and none of them more remarkable than the facts so far collected about bacteria. They live in us and around us, everywhere. They seem to be the hardest workers in the world, infinitely smaller than the ants, and yet more busy. Fortunately we cannot see them; if we could, life would be a nightmare, with air and water and everything else full of these tiny, dangerous creatures. But they nourish us as well as kill us, they rot the rocks into earth and they help all plants to grow. 'Eating bricks, collecting iron ore, burning haystacks, poisoning humanity, digesting grass; what a bacterial repertoire!' says the writer, one of the best known popular writers on scientific subjects today.

THE smallest living things of which much is known are the bacteria. They are surprisingly important in spite of their size. If the process of evolution from matter to mammal has been long and has passed through the bacterial level of organization, the latter has not been discarded. Possibly many other links or stages between matter and viruses and bacteria have utterly disappeared, making the evolution more difficult

to discover, but bacteria themselves have been retained and given a very great part in the economy of living organisms.

These tiny organisms are usually about one twenty-five-thousandth of an inch in diameter and about six times as long. Their appearance is very simple. They look like a small rod and in that case are called bacilli. If round they are called cocci, and if wriggling, spirilli. In many cases nothing but plain rods or blobs can be seen. There is no obvious internal structure, and yet the entities are alive. Their contents must be of a kind sufficiently complicated to support life. The wrigglers have hairs on them which lash about and propel them through the containing fluid.

They breed at an immense rate, about once every half-hour. If the whole of a single bacterium's progeny could be kept alive, it would total 281,474,976,710,656 members by the end of one day.

Besides a certain variation in shape, some bacteria have a characteristic group life. They grow in long chains, sometimes with the chains adjacent to form a mosaic or mat.

These characteristic groupings show great differences, but very many quite different species appear identical to the observer with his present microscope equipment. The species are distinguished by their effects, for of two species otherwise apparently identical, one may be deadly to animals and the other of great practical value for preparing human food.

Bacteria breed in the simplest manner. They just grow until they have reached a certain size and age, and then split in half, two bacteria being where there was one before. The process is descriptively as simple as that. Of course, if it could be examined minutely it would probably be discovered to be very complicated. There is no sexual machinery whatever. Reproduction in bacteria requires no separate sexes. This is philosophically interesting, for it seems to suggest that in the deepest analysis sex is not the most fundamental requirement in the mechanism of reproduction. It has evolved as a refinement with great possibilities and probably other purposes on the plain basis of reproduction by splitting into two.

The bacteria have a second powerful quality which helps them to survive. When conditions are adverse they temporarily change their nature, becoming tough and quiescent. In this second state they are described as having formed themselves into spores. These are extraordinarily resistant to an inimical environment. Even in steam of 30 lb. per square inch and at 120° C. they often retain their vitality for a quarter of an hour. In ordinary boiling water they may survive for hours. To be sure medical instruments are sterilized, they have to be exposed to moist super-heated steam in an autoclave, an apparatus devised for the purpose.

They resist extreme cold even more remarkably. After six months in liquid air at -190° C they have been found to retain their vitality, and in undisturbed

rest they survive for years. An organism which reproduces once in half an hour and while active is comparatively vulnerable, for boiling swiftly kills active bacteria, can change itself into a spore sleeping as it were for a period sufficient for thousands of generations of normal life. An active bacterium lives through about 50 generations in a day. A year sees 20,000 of its generations. If man could quiesce under adverse circumstances for a proportionate time the period would be about 1,000,000 years. He could pass all that time in waiting for the suitable environment to return. Thus the power of this quality of resistance in bacteria is very great. They may be floating in this dormant condition in the air, in food, even in icebergs and hailstones. As soon as they fall into a suitable environment, such as a sore throat for diphtheria, an unclean water-supply for cholera, warm blood in the veins of animals and men for anthrax, the dormancy ends and the bacteria reproduce vigorously. Others require apparently most unpromising substances for a necessary part of their respiration. Ammonia, free nitrogen from the air, sulphuretted hydrogen (the gas from bad eggs) are examples of peculiar substitutes or additions to the oxygen used by all other living organisms. These properties give bacteria their extraordinary power. They can accomplish the oddest tasks, turning fruit juice into wine, milk into butter and cheese, enrich the soil and poison animals and men.

The diphtheria bacillus flourishes in the human throat. During its life it emits a substance into the surrounding fluid which permeates into the blood stream. This substance is a poison and attacks the heart. But it also has a permanent effect on the patient's blood, for if the patient recovers, his blood is found to have been left by this poison in a resistant condition so that a second discharge from a second attack has no effect: the person has become immune. His blood seems to have been given a permanent quality inimical to the poison emitted by the diphtheria bacillus. In fact, his blood can be used as an aggressive agent. If a few drops are pricked out of him and mixed with the poison collected from a diphtheria colony, another person having the mixture injected into him will not suffer any harm. This is fortunate and strange. The poison can exist quite independently of the bacillus, which is easily demonstrated by filtering out bacilli from a culture and injecting the fluid into a suitable animal when the diphtheria symptoms will be exhibited even if the animal has no sore throat.

A subject recovered from diphtheria appears to have a chemical substance in his blood capable of neutralizing the diphtheria poison. The immunity conferred on a patient after recovery from typhoid fever operates in a different way. A few drops of this blood seems to have the power of causing the typhoid bacilli in a test-tube culture solution to coagulate and quiesce.

The operation of the bacteria which consume the

lungs and cause 'consumption' seems to depend on the condition of the patient. Nearly everyone contains consumption bacilli, but the bacillus does not flourish in him unless his body is susceptible. The exact cause of susceptibility is unknown, but associated in many cases with poor bodily condition, lack of nourishment and exercise, or weakness after an attack of pneumonia or some other illness. The bacillus itself is a tough one and difficult to kill.

The rate at which bacilli multiply ought to cause them to show changes in heredity. If man can evolve from some kind of ape in 100,000 generations, possibly bacilli might evolve new species in periods of years. Of course, the bacteria are so comparatively simple that there is not much scope for alterations in constitution, but the rapid succession of generations should utmostly exploit such as there is. Some direct evidence is in favour of the evolution of new species of bacteria. For instance, in recent years sleepy sickness has become a deadly infection. It was unknown or unrecognized in Europe twelve years ago. Perhaps the bacillus has evolved quickly or mutated ('mutation' is discussed later) from some other harmless species only since the beginning of the twentieth century.

Syphilis apparently changed from a tiresome into a dangerous infection in the fifteenth century.

The evils due to bacteria have received more attention than the goods. Their contribution to well-being is prodigious and varied. Some bacteria are capable of

living in the dark entirely on chemicals, without even the assistance of sunlight. These bacteria can produce life out of the indisputably dead. This fact suggests a bacterium may have been the first kind of organism to evolve from dead matter, for it could not live on itself and all other was purely dead matter. That is one justification for regarding bacteria or some organism of that sort as the link between dead and living matter. Another kind of bacteria can eat bricks. It is found in decaying stone, and perhaps is a type of organism which helped to manufacture soil in the Earth's youth. There is evidence that soil is made by these bacteria on barren rocks and mountain peaks.

Everyone knows peas, beans, lupins and other similar plants, and the important use of them in agriculture. Thousands of years ago agriculturalists discovered that an occasional crop of these plants enriched the soil if ploughed in without reaping. About 1880 this effect was carefully studied. Land had these crops cultivated on it for fifteen years in succession, then the soil was analysed. It contained three times more nitrogen than at the beginning. The plants had some power of taking the inert nitrogen out of the air and fixing it in the soil. When these plants were examined the well-known nodules on their roots in particular were carefully studied.

If the plants were grown in sterilized soil with additional chemicals, no nodules appeared on them and instead of increasing the nitrate content of the soil,

required extra nitrate as one of the chemical additions to keep them alive. The plants themselves were not different from other green plants in being unable to take nitrogen from the air, they could achieve that only with the assistance of the nodules. When people have lumps on them they are usually supposed to be ill, or at least, infected. Could the lupins be ill, and the cause of the illness be the power which took the nitrogen from the air and fixed it in the soil? Study revealed the bacteria in the nodules were storing nitrogen from the air, and when the nodules were ploughed into the soil, provided the refresher of nitrate.

Other kinds of bacteria have indirectly helped to create not agricultural, but industrial civilization. These use iron-rust or manganese in the construction of their cell-walls, and have produced accumulations of bog-iron ore, ochre, and manganese ores, subsequently to be turned into paint and bicycles and innumerable very inorganic objects.

No sight is more significant than the side of a hole in a field. The depth of life on the Earth is seen to be extraordinarily shallow, not more than a few dozen inches. The Earth is 8,000 miles in diameter; life penetrates perhaps eight feet into its surface. The precariousness of life, the green veil cosmically diaphanous, is revealed.

Every year the Earth rears a new growth of plants and animals. This has been repeated for centuries and millions of years. Why is there no great thickness of

organic debris? Because bacteria decompose it before it accumulates uncomfortably. The hard part of plants is mainly cellulose, the material of the walls of the plant's cells. This is consumed by certain bacteria and its constituents freed from combination, so the accumulation of plant debris never grows beyond a comparatively small quantity. During the process methane and sulphuretted hydrogen are released from the cellulose by bacteria, and the former is well-known as marsh-gas, which arises from the active bacteria in the woody debris of marshes. Sulphuretted hydrogen is recognized in the wind issuing from animals during digestion, and from humans whose digestive apparatus is not working properly. Horses especially belch wind. They live on grass containing much cellulose. Bacteria in their large intestine decompose the cellulose into substances from which the horses can derive nourishment, for cellulose cannot be directly digested by horses or humans. Much methane is produced in the intestine by the bacteria and issues as wind.

Bacteria are alive and the site of continuous chemical reactions and hence of evolution of heat. It is they that help to fire haystacks by 'spontaneous combustion'. They live in the hay and reduce it into fine fibres and powders very susceptible to chemical reaction with oxygen. When this happens the stack takes fire. Piles of cotton waste are also sometimes fired through bacterial action. This has been proved by sterilizing waste, and attempting to make it fire spontaneously.

It will not. If a little fresh waste is added it may, since the bacteria in it spread to the sterilized part of the pile and multiply, if the conditions are favourable.

Eating bricks, collecting iron ore, burning haystacks, poisoning humanity, digesting grass, what a bacterial repertoire!—and there are other major turns besides. Some good fish and most bad glows in the dark. The explanation of the shining is not yet known, but it is associated with bacterial action. Butcher's meat also frequently glows in the dark after two days in a cool room. When treated with a dilute salt solution the phosphorescence is increased.

Many bacteria including dangerous species are killed or tamed by light. Anthrax and typhus spores which resist severe treatment are killed by suitable exposure to sunlight. The rays beyond the violet, the invisible ultra-violet, are the most bactericidal and these can be produced artificially by various kinds of electric lamps. Even when the rays do not kill the bacteria they frequently enervate them and reduce their virulence. The bacterial role in the production of butter, cheese, alcoholic drinks, perfumes, tobacco, etc., must be mentioned. The subtle flavours of these commodities and luxuries are due to various bacteria, and cheese is itself a mass of bacterial bodies. The most perfect flavours are produced by particular bacteria, and the manufacturer must be careful to encourage these bacteria in his manufacturing processes. For butter and cheese it is possible to isolate some of these desirable

bacteria and culture them artificially. If the raw material is deficient in them or does not help their growth they can be added independently. These manufacturers ensure a fine and reliable flavour in their products. The bacteria responsible for defects such as acidity in butter and ropiness in milk are studied so that they may be avoided.

Many of the rarer sensations of life are due to the bacteria, many odours and perfumes and flavours. The deep sensation of health and profundity in things felt in the air of freshly-tilled fields on a spring morning is partly due to the odours produced by bacteria in the soil and released by ploughing. Good tobacco receives its aroma from the activity of bacteria during ripening. The subtleties of innumerable alcoholic drinks are bacterial by-products and for that reason so unapproachable by present chemical synthesis.

IX. ABOUT BIRDS

BY JULIAN HUXLEY

From Bird Watching and Bird Behaviour

BIRDS are fascinating creatures in every country, and they are the most beautiful things in our Indian landscape. Yet how few people seem to notice them; how very few enjoy them. There is nothing more thrilling in the Indian year than the time of the migration of birds at the beginning of the hot weather. For the change seems to come more rapidly then than in the later year when great flocks of duck and geese form spearheads in the sky. This passage is taken from a wireless talk by Professor Huxley, who as well as being a Professor of Zoology looks after the great London Zoo. It is written so persuasively that you will look at birds in a more exciting way than before.

To watch birds is delightful enough in itself; but most people like a background against which they can set their observations.

These feathered creatures, what are they in the economy of nature? What is their history, what may be their future? How do they compare with other kinds of living things?

The master-key here is the idea of evolution; it unlocks the door through which alone our biological backgrounds become visible. There are no other animals

built in at all the same way as birds. How did they come to evolve in their present condition?

The first thing that evolutionary study teaches us is that birds were not always so different from other creatures as they are today. The few fossil birds known from the Upper Cretaceous age, seventy or eighty million years back, all had teeth like any lizard. When we reach the Jurassic period, nearly twice as long ago, the only two specimens of birds so far found were so unlike any ordinary bird in their construction that, if it were not for the lucky accident of their having been embedded in such fine mud that the imprint of their feathers is still preserved to us, we should have been in doubt as to whether they were birds at all. They might almost equally well have been exceptionally agile reptiles, for they were toothed, had long jointed tail-bones, and big claws on their fore-limbs. And before this time in the world's history, for all the hundreds of millions of years since life began, there were no birds at all.

Birds, in fact, are the offshoot from one kind of very active reptile, probably related to some of the smaller Dinosaurs. They became birds through the evolution of feathers out of scales, which first, by acting as a heat-retaining blanket, allowed their temperature to be kept at a high level, well above that of their surroundings, and secondly made flight possible. The other peculiarities of modern birds, such as their using their high body-temperature to brood their eggs, the

transformation of their originally long and awkward tail, like a kite's, into an efficient rudder-fan; or the lightening of their dead weight by the substitution of horny beaks for heavy teeth—all these came later. By about forty or fifty million years ago, all birds had become of the essentially modern type; nothing has happened since then save a perfecting of the different branches—duck, or hawk, or song-bird—for particular modes of life

There have been three other groups of animals to achieve true flight; one, the flying insects, arose from a wholly different stock, and two from the same back-boned stock to which the birds belong—the flying mammals or bats, and the flying reptiles or pterodactyls, the latter all long extinct.

The great advantage which the birds had over their vertebrate competitors in the art of flying was that they, possessing feathers, could make a wing of these; while the skinny flight-membranes of bats and pterodactyls had to be stretched and so demanded attachment to hind- as well as to fore-limb. Bats cannot run or hop, nor could pterodactyls; their legs are subordinated to their wings. But birds kept their legs clear of this entanglement, as the ancestors of man kept their fore-limbs clear of running; and so birds were free both of the air and the earth, one pair of limbs for each element.

Insects are the equal of birds in this respect, but they are inferior in another. They can never grow big. It

would take too long to go into the reason why, but the fact remains; an insect as big as a swan or even a thrush is, luckily for us, unthinkable. Small size is in itself a disadvantage; it brings the further disadvantage in its train that it prevents an animal having a constant temperature higher than its surroundings, for its bulk is so small in proportion to its surface that the heat generated by the chemical combustion in its muscles all leaks away in no time.

So insects are not only small, but the whole tempo of their lives goes up and down with the temperature of the outer world. They cannot achieve the constancy of living possible to a bird or a mammal, and are at a great disadvantage in winter, being put out of action more or less completely by the cold.

However, though birds can grow big in comparison with insects, they are limited in size in comparison with other vertebrates. This comes from the fact of flight, the laws of aerodynamics make it very inconvenient for a flying bird to weigh much over fifty pounds, and quite impossible for it to weigh as much as a horse or even a leopard. It is only the birds which have given up flying, like ostrich or cassowary, or the extinct moa or dodo, which have even begun to grow big according to mammalian or reptilian standards.

(In passing, these considerations show what a biological impossibility is the conventional winged angel. Mr Haldane has taken the trouble to calculate that an angel of average human stature would require such

huge muscles to move his wings that they would have to project four or five feet in front of his sternum)

The stock size for birds is, in fact, from something under an ounce to about ten or fifteen pounds; their construction forces them to play their role in the world within these limits of weight.

The next valuable light which evolution throws on birds is that they do not in any way represent a past stage in man's evolutionary development, but have developed divergently along their own lines. Birds and mammals, in fact, represent two quite distinct branches of the tree of life, which developed quite independently from reptiles. And they developed from two quite distinct reptilian stocks, so that if we want to find a common ancestor for furry mammal and feathery bird, we must look for it in the most primitive kinds of reptiles, and must go back at least to the very beginning of the middle ages of life, about two hundred million years back. Their special resemblances, such as the uniform and high temperature, have been independently evolved in the two stocks, and in some cases, as with the division of the heart into two quite different sides for more efficiency in circulation, though the result is the same, the evolutionary method followed has been dissimilar.

Birds have kept reptilian-looking scales on their feet, and have stuck to the reptile's method of reproduction by large-yolked eggs contained in a protective shell. In some ways, however, the bird

branch has evolved beyond their rivals the mammals, and in these respects must be regarded as at the very tiptop of the tree of life. Birds have the highest temperature, and therefore the greatest speed of vital chemistry, of any creatures. They have the greatest activity, the greatest emotional variety; they show the highest extremes in beauty of colour and pattern; they have the most striking and highly developed courtship of any group of animals, and their songs are by far the most beautiful and elaborate music that the world knew before the coming of man. They are the most mobile of creatures and so at a great advantage over every other kind of land animal in high latitudes, for they can breed there and take advantage of the riches of the Arctic lands and still more of the Arctic seas during the summer, and then migrate to temperate climates, leaving a few wretched foxes and reindeer to eke out existence over the inhospitable winter

There are two lines in which mammals have beaten the world—in brain-development and efficient methods of reproduction. As regards reproduction, it seems clear that the fact of flight discouraged any adoption of the perfected mammalian method of nourishing the unborn young within the mother's body. Extra weight is a severe handicap to a bird; and when it can mature and lay its eggs one at a time, and yet hatch them all out at once by putting off incubation until all are laid, it would be a disadvantage to handicap

itself by the weight of half a dozen embryos at once. And it is perhaps just because of the birds' very success in the matter of flight and of high temperature that they failed to progress further in regard to brains. So many avenues were thrown open to them through their mobility and their activity that no pressure lay on them to circumvent fate by means of intelligence. Possibly too, their relatively small size had some say in the matter. Intelligence depends on making new combinations of nerve-paths in the higher centres of the brain; and for this a much larger number of nerve-cells and fibres seem to be required than for even the most elaborate equipment of the fixed nerve routes by which instincts operate.

One thing at least is certain and significant; whereas in the general stock of mammals, progress was being made and new specialized lines budded out up till a mere five or ten million years ago, and in the line of man's descent evolutionary advance has continued up to the present and may well be prolonged into the future, the birds settled down to stability about half way through the Tertiary Epoch, about twenty or thirty millions of years back, and since then, though they have doubtless sprouted out innumerable tiny side-twigs of new species and genera, do not seem to have made any real evolutionary progress.

Nor are they likely to achieve any in the future. Like the insects, whose most advanced types such as the ants have been living the same kind of lives,

endowed with the same kind of structure, for an even longer space of time, they seem to have reached the limit of perfection attainable, in the circumstances prevailing upon the earth, by the kind of creature which they are. They have attained the limiting speed of flight possible to living flying machines operating with feathers and one pair of wings; their temperature is as high as it can profitably be made; their migrations take them to the extreme of habitability in high latitudes; their ability in nest-building is as great as could be attained by instinct alone.

We must remember, however, that evolution is never all progress. Progress, it seems, there has always been, but it is progress in the upper limits of life's achievements, not in the great bulk of her productions. Indeed the impulsion to progress comes from the very fact that there already exists this great mass of animals and plants which have already reached a more or less final and stable relation with the world about them, and have already adequately filled the lower and more obvious places in life's economy. It is just because there exists such competition in the old ways of life that it is an advantage for any creature to push forward and adopt new and improved methods.

Each group that has reached stability is thus filling a very definite place in the elaborate system of exchanges which constitutes the balance of Nature. Looked at from this point of view, as regards what

they do rather than how they do it, birds take on a new interest. The great majority of them are eaters of other animals, either throughout life, or in the case of small grain-eating birds like various finches, throughout their greedy nestling period. In this way they have stuck to the ancestral predilections of vertebrates, which were all in origin flesh-eaters; a herbivorous diet only began later in vertebrate evolution, with some of the big reptiles, and later and still more efficiently with some of the bigger mammals. Among birds, on the other hand, very few are herbivorous, such are some of the geese and ducks.

The birds as a whole thus stuck to a meat diet; but their average size determined the size of their prey. The great majority of them are so moderate in bulk that they can only eat small creatures; and these small creatures, though they will include worms and snails and spiders, will by the nature of the biological world be for the most part insects. Some of the larger birds eat creatures up to the scale of frogs and mice, or are carrion feeders, or prey on other, smaller birds; and there are of course numerous water-birds which live on crustacea, the aquatic equivalent of insects, on molluscs, and on fish. But if we could take statistics of the food of all birds, in especial of all land birds, we should find that insects headed the list

Now insects, in contradistinction to vertebrates, are in the great majority vegetable-feeders, both by ancestral predilection and modern practice. So that in regard

to what we might call biological trade, the complicated circulation of matter through lifeless forms in earth, water and air, through green plants, animal bodies, and microscopic scavengers like moulds and bacteria, and back into lifeless forms again, the nett effect of birds is to be a check upon insects in their consumption of green plants and their products. In this way they are obviously the allies of man: remove every bird in the world at one stroke, the biological balance would be tilted, and it would be much harder even than now to protect man's crops and trees from the ravages of their persistent insect consumers. Birds in fact are one of the few groups of animal whose activities as a whole are useful to man.

But do not let us run away with the idea that economics are everything. There was a letter in *The Times* not long ago apropos of Sir Hilton Young's Bill for safeguarding some of the beauties of the countryside. The writer, after pointing out that the Bill, if it became law, would involve in certain cases some financial sacrifice for individuals or for the country, continued 'and after all, the aims of the measure are merely aesthetic'—and therefore in his estimation not to be weighed against even small quantities of £ s.d.

It is just this point of view—the attitude embodied in that word merely—which I want to combat. Economics is the foundation of everything, and money is money and must be made. We may know that elementary truth well enough, and yet be permitted

the reminder that the really important thing is what we are going to ask of our money when we have made it. We may ask leisure, or a bigger house, or travel, or a gay life, or power, or bits of several in turn. And one thing that some will want to ask for is the refreshment of unspoilt country and the delight of wild birds. England is getting so crowded now, with mechanical devices so huge and pervading, and travel so easy, that the different things different people ask from money are coming to clash with each other.

If the wants of different kinds of people are to be satisfied, there has got to be not only forbearance and good will but regulation and restriction.

The bird-watcher and the bird-lover ask for more birds, and more different kinds of them, and more opportunities of quietly watching and studying them. In the last thirty or forty years there has been a welcome change in the attitude of the general public about birds. They are more interested in them, fonder of them, delight to see photographs and read accounts of them in their wild state but deprecate the killing of them or the wanton taking of their eggs much more than they used to. The bird-watcher can help the growth of this changed attitude. We have gone a long way, but could go much further. In some American towns there are now bird-boxes everywhere in city parks and private gardens and bird-tables and bird-baths—and naturally an enormous increase in the number of birds to gladden the eyes of city-

dwellers In Germany, before the war, I went once casually into the city park at Würzburg, and found an astounding* plenty of birds, and people feeding them. One man had a couple of tits on his hand, chaffinches and blackbirds at his feet; he told me he once had a spotted woodpecker swoop down from a tree and take a nut from his fingers. And the hawfinches, those fantastic huge-billed birds, so shy that many country people do not know of their existence, even where they are not uncommon—they were sitting about in the trees like sparrows; I even saw a pair of them courting over a public path and in full view and sound of the trams and traffic in the street beyond.

We could encourage and tame birds like this in our gardens and our cities and our parks if we wanted to.

The bird-lover can help to see that the Bird Protection laws are enforced; for in spite of the general change of attitude, there is still plenty of killing of rare birds and egg-snatching of rare eggs by people with the ridiculous collection-mania, plenty of snaring of linnets and goldfinches and other song-birds to be put into cages, plenty of wanton shooting, especially of something unusual just because it is unusual.

He can try and get the law changed; to take an example, the law which permits the discharge of waste oil from oil-driven ships at sea, to drift about and foul our shores and in doing so to smear itself on the plumage of hundreds of guillemots and divers and puffins and other sea-birds, prevent them from opening

their wings, and so condemn them to death from starvation. If you want ocular demonstrations, go and look at the case in the Central Hall of the Natural History Museum at South Kensington which shows what happens to birds when the oily filth gets onto their feathers.

And he can help by supporting such bodies as the National Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, which are saving wild bits of country from being built over or otherwise developed, or reserving them as actual sanctuaries, inviolate to the birds, or providing bird-rests at lighthouses to prevent dazzled migrants from being drowned, or paying watchers to see that protected birds are not shot or robbed of their eggs

The nineteenth century robbed this country of many treasures of bird-life. There is, however, no reason why some of them at least should not be recovered for us and our descendants. The great bustard is perhaps an inevitable loss, but protection has brought the bittern back to breed and boom in Norfolk; the raven is here and there spreading back from the hill-fastnesses and cliff nesting-sites whither persecution drove it, down again to nest in trees in the lowlands.

The lovely black-and-white avocet, the fantastic ruff, the handsome godwit that once bred on many of our coasts before egg-stealers and even more the casual man with a gun drove them away, still nest abundantly just across the sea in Holland; and there is no reason

at all why we should not lure them back again, and the black terns and strange great spoonbills too, if we set our mind to it.

For—and this is my last word—in considering the birds' place in Nature we must remember that they have a place in civilization as well as in wild nature, and that even if we be busy mechanizing so many aspects of life, or rather, just because we *are* mechanizing them, there is all the more reason to reserve to birds—shy birds as well as tame, rare birds as well as common—a place in our civilized scheme of things, and to see that that place is kept for them, and so for our delectation and that of our posterity.

X. ABOUT ANIMALS

BY H. G. WELLS, JULIAN HUXLEY AND G. P. WELLS

From *The Science of Life*

THE following passage describes a few simple problems set to animals to test their intelligence. The writers tell us that 'the method is to set a problem for the animal to solve, and then to see what it will do, taking the greatest care not to prompt it or guide it in any way. If possible, the investigator should be outside the room and watch through a peephole.' These animal tests are comparatively new and you may ask what their purpose is. They are part of an endeavour by scientists to estimate and map out the intelligence of mammals. This effort depends upon the idea of evolution, which says that through the ages creatures have developed because in the struggle for existence the fittest—mentally as well as physically—have survived. In this scheme man is at the head and still shows possibility of mental development. Other animals often show that they will not develop any further. When the map is completed it will show how through countless ages the mammals have evolved intelligence.

A FAVOURITE type of experiment is as follows. Food is put inside a shut box, to which some latch or spring or hidden passage will give access, and the unfed animal is left outside the box, or vice versa, the animal is imprisoned in a puzzle-box and food and

liberty are outside. If practicable, the first method is the better, as the animals are not flustered or frightened at their imprisonment. Rats and squirrels can do little but find hidden weak spots through which they could dig a tunnel; but creatures with considerable skill in manipulation, like dogs and racoons, are capable of quite elaborate feats. They learn how to slide back a bolt, to push down a lever, to pull the dragging-loop of a string which opens the door and so forth. They even learn, all by themselves, combination fastenings in which several operations have to be performed in a definite order before the door will open. But—and this is a very important point—they learn their tasks with scarcely an infusion of what one might call reasoning; the process is essentially one of trial and error. They claw about until a happy accident produces the right result; and then, as the test is repeated, by what seems a fundamental law of learning, the successful movements are gradually ‘stamped in’ to their behaviour, the unsuccessful ones gradually ‘stamped out’. They improve steadily in their performance until they do the trick quickly and automatically. But what they have mastered is a trick of movement, not an understanding of how the lever or the catch or the string works. They have not so much learnt a lesson as formed a habit. For alter the arrangement of the fastenings, without any change in the mechanical principle involved, and they have to begin again at the beginning with random

scrabblings and build up a new movement-habit as laboriously as before.

A dog, for example, learns of its own accord to get into a large box for food, by pressing a little lever. One day the box is turned through a right angle. The animal is completely put off, it goes up to where the lever used to be and scratches away fruitlessly, and it takes as long to learn how to get in as it did the first time.

Just the same automatic habit-formation without any insight is brought about when animals are trained to run a maze to get food or liberty. Rats, for instance, will quite soon learn the secrets of even complicated mazes, such as a miniature of the celebrated one at Hampton Court. But this is a blankly unintelligent habit. A human being who has learnt a maze fairly well will never go wrong at the entrance; the first turning is the first thing he learns. But rats, even when they have reduced their mistakes to very few, are just as likely to make one at the first turning as anywhere else. Similarly, if a man is set to learn a maze which is a mirror-image of one he has already learnt well, he quickly recognizes the fact, and by always substituting right turn for left turn succeeds very soon with his new task. Not so the rats; such a maze is no easier to them than a completely new one. They are unable to grasp its analogy with the first.

We ourselves form motor-habits of much the same kind. Your house is, in a sense, a problem box, you

have to learn your way about it, and the mechanical automaticity with which you proceed from the bedroom to the dining-room to get your breakfast, perhaps while thinking of something quite different, is parallel to the mechanical way in which the animals solve their problems when they have been learnt. The animal sees its box, presses the lever, gets inside, and thus earns its meals; but it no more thinks out the train of actions as a logical sequence when it performs them than you think out the motions of your legs and the turnings of your door-handles on your way to breakfast. The process by which your motor-habit was established was rather different from the trial-and-error method of the animal, but the final result is strictly parallel. Another example of a human motor-habit is afforded by the actor who has repeated the same lines night after night for hundreds of nights, and now goes through his performance mechanically; if the habit, the automatic flow of words, should fail for a moment, he is helpless and breaks down completely.

It is not by any means easy to tell what part automatic motor habits of this kind play in the lives of wild mammals. We may guess that a rabbit runs round its burrow as automatically as we run round our houses. In one or two cases, we have more definite information of animals whose actions have been stereotyped into a cast-iron routine. Thus there are animals which deposit their dung in the same place day after day, with extraordinary pertinacity. Then there are

rounds made by animals in search of food. The Malayan rhinoceros, for instance, has a regular round of feeding-grounds, which he covers in about a month. Dr Ridley describes well-worn tracks through the forest, about three feet across, along which the animals travel, generally by night. There is a story of a temporary hospital hut, which had been hastily run up, and happened to be exactly on a rhinoceros track; when the beast came round again, he went in at one door, down the central passage between the beds, and out at the other, much to the alarm of the patients.

But we must get back to our puzzle-boxes. When a habit is established, its automatic execution is very similar in man and beast. But there is a great and important difference in the way in which habits are acquired. The animals in the experiments, in most cases at any rate, solve their problems by scrabbling about aimlessly and remembering the movements which happen to work. But put a man in a strange situation and the odds are he will behave in an altogether more reasonable way. He will think things over, and not begin to try solutions until he gets some kind of idea to work on.

We would make it clear here that the essential contrast does not lie between human behaviour and the behaviour of other mammals. It lies between two different methods of attacking problems. One method is to try all sorts of movements in the hope of muddling through, the other is to attempt to understand the

problem before actually performing its solution. On the whole, most mammals in these experiments employ the first method, and most men, in the affairs of everyday life, employ the second.

Let us take a simple example. We rig up a little piece of wire-netting at right angles to the walls of a house; after three or four yards we put a right-angle bend into it, so that it runs parallel with the house for another couple of yards. For our experiment with this simplest of 'mazes' we choose three organisms—a hen, a dog, and a child of five or six. We lead them up to the wire-netting and throw a tit-bit (the tit-bit is of course, suited to each subject) over it. The problem is successfully solved if the subject of the test without hesitation sums up the situation and makes off round the backwardly projecting bit of wire-netting to the prize. You may say that the problem is so stupidly simple as to be no problem. Not at all. The hen never solves it properly. So long as it sees and wants the food it will dash and flutter vainly against the netting. If it does succeed in getting round to the tit-bit, it will be because it has abandoned the problem and started to go away, and then accidentally turned so as to see the food from a more favourable position. The little human creature, on the other hand, will never fail to trot round. And the dog is intermediate. If the food is thrown well over the wire, the dog may make a few ineffectual jumps towards it, but then will, it seems, suddenly grasp the problem,

and run round to get it in a purposeful and single sweep. But if the food be dropped just over the wire, so that it is within a few inches of its nose, it behaves as stupidly as the hen. The stimulus is now too potent; the dog is, as it were, magnetized by it and cannot acquire the detachment needed to run round, and so he remains scrabbling and barking stupidly at the unattainable food. Maier has studied behaviour of this sort in great detail. He finds it to occur also in other mammals, such as the rat. It is dependent on something akin to reason, and is quite distinct from the mere ability to learn a maze.

The differences in method of attack between bird, mammal, and human child are impressive, they represent an important step in the evolutionary process that has led up to the human intellect.

STORIES

XI. ULTIMA THULE

BY JOHN GALSWORTHY

From *Caravan*

GALSWORTHY'S collection of short stories called *Caravan* is one of the finest in English, and for a generation this literature has been growing very rich in short stories. In modern short stories, as we see from all three examples here, narrative commonly grows out of character. Very often an interesting central character is drawn, and our sympathy being caught, we are interested to hear a story about him. The other characters exist in connexion with the central character and they grow out of their contact with him. Character and narrative exist together in the short story in varying proportions and the essence of the thing is the quick, deft drawing

ULTIMA THULE! The words come into my head this winter night. That is why I write down the story, as I know it, of a little old friend.

I used to see him first in Kensington Gardens, where he came in the afternoons, accompanied by a very small girl. One would see them silent before a shrub or flower, or with their heads inclined to heaven before a tree, or leaning above water and the ducks, or stretched on their stomachs watching a beetle, or on their backs watching the sky. Often they would stand

holding crumbs out to the birds, who would perch about them, and even drop on their arms little white marks of affection and esteem. They were admittedly a noticeable couple. The child, who was fair-haired and elfinlike, with dark eyes and a pointed chin, wore clothes that seemed somewhat hard put to it. And, if the two were not standing still, she went along pulling at his hand, eager to get there, and, since he was a very little, light old man, he seemed always in advance of his own feet. He was garbed, if I remember, in a daverdy brown overcoat and broad-brimmed soft grey hat, and his trousers, what was visible of them, were tucked into half-length black garters which tried to join with very old brown shoes. Indeed, his costume did not indicate any great share of prosperity. But it was his face that riveted attention. Thin, cherry-red, and wind-dried as old wood, it had a special sort of brightness, with its spikes and waves of silvery hair, and blue eyes which seemed to shine. Rather mad, I used to think. Standing by the rails of an enclosure, with his withered lips pursed and his cheeks drawn in till you would think the wind might blow through them, he would emit the most enticing trills and pipings, exactly imitating various birds.

Those who rouse our interest are generally the last people we speak to, for interest seems to set up a kind of special shyness, so it was long before I made his acquaintance. But one day by the Serpentine, I saw him coming along alone, looking sad, but still with

that queer brightness about him. He sat down on my bench with his little dried hands on his thin little knees, and began talking to himself in a sort of whisper. Presently I caught the words: 'God cannot be like us.' And for fear that he might go on uttering such precious remarks that were obviously not intended to be heard, I had either to go away or else address him. So, on an impulse, I said:

'Why?'

He turned without surprise.

'I've lost my landlady's little girl,' he said
'Dead! And only seven years old.'

'That little thing I used to watch you with?'

'Did you? Did you? I'm glad you saw her.'

'I used to see you looking at flowers, and trees, and those ducks.'

His face brightened wistfully. 'Yes, she was a great companion to an old man like me.' And he relapsed into his contemplation of the water. He had a curious, precise way of speaking, that matched his pipchinesque little old face. At last he again turned to me those blue youthful eyes which seemed to shine out of a perfect little nest of crow's-feet.

'We were great friends! But I couldn't expect it. Things don't last, do they?' I was glad to notice that his voice was getting cheerful. 'When I was in the Orchestra at the Harmony Theatre, it never used to occur to me that some day I shouldn't play there any more. One felt like a bird. That's the beauty of

music, sir. You lose yourself; like that blackbird there.' He imitated the note of a blackbird, so perfectly that I could have sworn the bird started.

'Birds and flowers! Wonderful things, wonderful! Why, even a buttercup!' He pointed at one of those little golden flowers with his toe. 'Did you ever see such a marvellous thing?' And he turned his face up at me.

'And yet, somebody told me once that they don't agree with cows. Now can that be? I'm not a countryman—though I was born at Kingston.'

'The cows do well enough on them,' I said, 'in my part of the world. In fact, the farmers say they like to see buttercups.'

'I'm glad to hear you say that. I was always sorry to think they disagreed.'

When I got up to go, he rose, too.

'I take it as very kind of you,' he said, 'to have spoken to me.'

'The pleasure was mine. I am generally to be found hereabouts in the afternoons any time you like a talk.'

'Delighted,' he said, 'delighted. I make friends of the creatures and flowers as much as possible, but they can't always make us understand.' And after we had taken off our respective hats, he reseated himself, with his hands on his knees.

Next time I came across him standing by the rails of an enclosure, and, in his arms, an old and really wretched-looking cat

‘I don’t like boys,’ he said, without preliminary of any sort. ‘What do you think they were doing to this poor old cat? Dragging it along by a string to drown it; see where it’s cut into the fur! I think boys despise the old and weak!’ He held it out to me. At the ends of those little sticks of arms the beast looked more dead than alive, I had never seen a more miserable creature.

‘I think a cat,’ he said, ‘is one of the most marvellous things in the world. Such a depth of life in it.’

And, as he spoke, the cat opened its mouth as if protesting at that assertion. It *was* the sorriest-looking beast.

‘What are you going to do with it?’

‘Take it home; it looks to me as if it might die.’

‘You don’t think that might be more merciful?’

‘It depends; it depends. I shall see. I fancy a little kindness might do a great deal for it. It’s got plenty of spirit. I can see from its eye.’

‘May I come along with you a bit?’

‘Oh!’ he said, ‘delighted.’

We walked on side by side, exciting the derision of nearly everyone we passed—his face looked so like a mother’s when she is feeding her baby!

‘You’ll find this’ll be quite a different cat tomorrow,’ he said. ‘I shall have to get in, though, without my landlady seeing, a funny woman! I have two or three strays already.’

‘ Can I help in any way ? ’

‘ Thank you,’ he said ‘ I shall ring the area bell, and as she comes out below I shall go in above She’ll think it’s boys They *are* like that ’

‘ But doesn’t she do your rooms, or anything ? ’

A smile puckered his face ‘ I’ve only one ; I do it myself. Oh, it’d never do to have her about, even if I could afford it But,’ he added, ‘ if you’re so kind as to come with me to the door, you might engage her by asking where Mr Thompson lives. That’s me. In the musical world my name was Moronelli ; not that I have Italian blood in me, of course ’

‘ And I shall come up ? ’

‘ Honoured , but I live very quietly ’

We passed out of the gardens at Lancaster Gate, where all the house-fronts seem so successful, and out of it into a little street that was extremely like a grubby child trying to hide under its mother’s skirts. Here he took a newspaper from his pocket and wrapped it round the cat

‘ She’s a funny woman,’ he repeated, ‘ Scotch descent, you know ’ Suddenly he pulled an area bell and scuttled up the steps

When he had opened the door, however, I saw before him in the hall a short, thin woman dressed in black, with a sharp bumpy face Her voice sounded brisk and resolute.

‘ What have you got there, Mr Thompson ? ’

‘ Newspaper, Mrs March ’

‘ Oh, indeed ! Now, you re not going to take that cat upstairs ! ’

The little old fellow’s voice acquired a sudden shrill determination. ‘ Stand aside, please. If you stop me, I’ll give you notice. That cat is going up. It’s ill, and it is going up. ’

It was then I said :

‘ Does Mr Thompson live here ? ’

In that second he shot past her, and ascended.

‘ That’s him,’ she said ; ‘ and I wish it wasn’t, with his dirty cats Do you want him ? ’

‘ I do. ’

‘ He lives at the top ’ Then, with a grudging apology. ‘ I can’t help it, he tries me—he’s very trying. ’

‘ I am sure he is. ’

She looked at me The longing to talk that comes over those who answer bells all day, and the peculiar Scottish desire to justify oneself, rose together in that face which seemed all promontories dried by an east wind

‘ Ah ! ’ she said ; ‘ he is. I don’t deny his heart ; but he’s got no sense of anything. Goodness knows what he hasn’t got up there. I wonder I keep him. An old man like that ought to know better ; half-starving himself to feed them. ’ She paused, and her eyes, which had a cold and honest glitter, searched me closely.

‘ If you’re going up,’ she said, ‘ I hope you’ll give

him good advice. He never lets me in. I wonder I keep him.'

There were three flights of stairs, narrow, clean, and smelling of oilcloth. Selecting one of two doors at random, I knocked. His silvery head and bright, pinched face were cautiously poked out.

'Ah!' he said; 'I thought it might be her!'

The room, which was fairly large, had a bare floor with little on it save a camp-bed and chest of drawers with jug and basin. A large bird-cage on the wall hung wide open. The place smelt of soap and a little of beasts and birds. Into the walls, whitewashed over a green wall-paper which stared through in places, were driven nails with their heads knocked off, on to which bits of wood had been spiked, so that they stood out as bird-perches high above the ground. Over the open window a piece of wire-netting had been fixed. A little spirit-stove and an old dressing-gown hanging on a peg completed the accoutrements of a room which one entered with a certain diffidence. He had not exaggerated. Besides the new cat, there were three other cats and four birds, all—save one, a bullfinch—invalids. The cats kept close to the walls, avoiding me, but wherever my little, old friend went they followed him with their eyes. The birds were in the cage, except the bullfinch, which had perched on his shoulder.

'How on earth,' I said, 'do you manage to keep cats and birds in one room?'

‘There is danger,’ he answered, ‘but I have not had a disaster yet. Till their legs or wings are mended, they hardly come out of the cage; and after that they keep on my perches. But they don’t stay long, you know, when they’re once well. That wire is only put over the window while they’re mending; it’ll be off tomorrow for this lot.’

‘And then they’ll go?’

‘Yes. The sparrow first, and then the two thrushes.’

‘And this fellow?’

‘Ask him,’ he said. ‘Would you go, bully?’ But the bullfinch did not deign to answer.

‘And were all those cats, too, in trouble?’

‘Yes,’ he said. ‘They wouldn’t want me if they weren’t’

Thereupon he began to warm some blue-looking milk, contemplating the new cat, which he had placed in a round basket close to the little stove, while the bullfinch sat on his head. It seemed time to go.

‘Delighted to see you, sir,’ he said, ‘any day.’ And, pointing up at the bullfinch on his head, he added ‘Did you ever see anything so wonderful as that bird? The size of its heart! Really marvellous’

To the rapt sound of that word marvellous, and full of the memory of his mysterious brightness while he stood pointing upward to the bird perched on his thick, silvery hair, I went.

The landlady was still at the bottom of the stairs, and began at once. ‘So you found him! I don’t

know why I keep him. Of course, he was kind to my little girl.' I saw tears gather in her eyes.

' With his cats and his birds, I wonder I keep him! But where would he go? He's no relations, and no friends—not a friend in the world, I think! He's a character—lives on air—feeding them cats! I've no patience with them, eating him up. He never lets me in. Cats and birds! I wonder I keep him. Losing himself for those rubbishy things! It's my belief he was always like that, and that's why he never got on. He's no sense of anything '

And she gave me a shrewd look, wondering, no doubt, what the deuce I had come about.

I did not come across him again in the gardens for some time, and went at last to pay him a call. At the entrance to a mews, just round the corner of his grubby little street, I found a knot of people collected round one of those bears that are sometimes led through the less conspicuous streets of our huge town. The yellowish beast was sitting up in deference to its master's rod, uttering little grunts, and moving its uplifted snout from side to side, in the way bears have. But it seemed to be extracting more amusement than money from its audience.

' Let your bear down off its hind legs and I'll give you a penny.' And suddenly I saw my little old friend under his flopping grey hat, amongst the spectators, all taller than himself. But the bear's master only grinned

and prodded the animal in the chest. He evidently knew a good thing when he saw it.

‘ I’ll give you twopence to let him down.’

Again the bear-man grinned. ‘ More ! ’ he said, and again prodded the bear’s chest. The spectators were laughing now.

‘ Threepence ! And if you don’t let him down for that, I’ll hit you in the eye.’

The bear-man held out his hand. ‘ All a-right,’ he said, ‘ threepence : I let him down.’

I saw the coins pass and the beast dropping on his forefeet ; but just then a policeman coming in sight, the man led his bear off, and I was left alone with my little old friend.

‘ I wish I had that poor bear,’ he said ; ‘ I could teach him to be happy. But, even if I could buy him, what could I do with him up there ? She’s such a funny woman.’

He looked quite dim, but brightened as we went along.

‘ A bear,’ he said, ‘ is really an extraordinary animal. What wise little eyes he has ! I do think he’s a marvellous creation ! My cats will have to go without their dinner, though I was going to buy it with that threepence.’

I begged to be allowed the privilege.

‘ Willingly ! ’ he said ‘ Shall we go in here ? They like cod’s head best ’

While we stood waiting to be served I saw the usual

derisive smile pass over the fishmonger's face. But my little old friend by no means noticed it; he was too busy looking at the fish. 'A fish is a marvellous thing, when you come to think of it,' he murmured. 'Look at its scales Did you ever see such mechanism?'

We bought five cod's heads, and I left him carrying them in a bag, evidently lost in the anticipation of five cats eating them.

After that I saw him often, going with him sometimes to buy food for his cats, which seemed ever to increase in numbers. His talk was always of his strays, and the marvels of creation, and that time of his life when he played the flute at the Harmony Theatre. He had been out of a job, it seemed, for more than ten years; and, when questioned, only sighed and answered. 'Don't talk about it, please!'

His bumpy landlady never failed to favour me with a little conversation. She was one of those women who have terrific consciences, and terrible grudges against them.

'I never get out,' she would say

'Why not?'

'Couldn't leave the house

'It won't run away!'

But she would look at me as if she thought it might. and repeat.

'Oh! I never get out'

An extremely Scottish temperament.

Considering her descent, however, she was curiously

devoid of success, struggling on apparently from week to week, cleaning, and answering the bell, and never getting out, and wondering why she kept my little old friend; just as he struggled on from week to week, getting out and collecting strays, and discovering the marvels of creation, and finding her a funny woman. Their hands were joined, one must suppose, by that dead child.

One July afternoon, however, I found her very much upset. He had been taken dangerously ill three days before.

'There he is,' she said; 'can't touch a thing. It's my belief he's done for himself, giving his food away all these years to those cats of his. I shoosed 'em out today, the nasty creatures; they won't get in again.'

'Oh!' I said, 'you shouldn't have done that. It'll only make him miserable.'

She flounced her head up. 'Hoh!' she said; 'I wonder I've kept him all this time, with his birds and his cats dirtying my house. And there he lies, talking gibberish about them. He made me write to a Mr Jackson, of some theatre or other—I've no patience with him. And that little bullfinch all the time perching on his pillow, the dirty little thing! I'd have turned it out, too, only it wouldn't let me catch it.'

'What does the doctor say?'

'Double pneumonia—caught it getting his feet wet, after some stray, I'll be bound. I'm nursing him. There has to be someone with him all the time.'

He was lying very still when I went up, with the sunlight falling across the foot of his bed, and, sure enough, the bullfinch perching on his pillow. In that high fever he looked brighter than ever. He was not exactly delirious, yet not exactly master of his thoughts.

‘Mr Jackson! He’ll be here soon. Mr Jackson! He’ll do it for me. I can ask him, if I die. A funny woman. I don’t want to eat, I’m not a great eater—I want my breath, that’s all.’

At sound of his voice the bullfinch fluttered off the pillow and flew round and round the room, as if alarmed at something new in the tones that were coming from its master.

Then he seemed to recognize me. ‘I think I’m going to die,’ he said; ‘I’m very weak. It’s lucky there’s nobody to mind. If only he’d come soon I wish’—and he raised himself with feeble excitement—‘I wish you’d take that wire off the window, I want my cats. She turned them out. I want him to promise me to take them, and bully-boy, and feed them with my money, when I’m dead’.

Seeing that excitement was certainly worse for him than cats, I took the wire off. He fell back, quiet at once; and presently, first one and then another cat came stealing in, till there were four or five seated against the walls. The moment he ceased to speak the bullfinch, too, came back to his pillow. His eyes looked most supernaturally bright, staring out of his little,

withered-up old face at the sunlight playing on his bed; he said just audibly 'Did you ever see anything more wonderful' than sunlight? It's really marvellous!' After that he fell into a sort of doze or stupor. And I continued to sit there in the window, relieved, but rather humiliated, that he had not asked me to take care of his cats and bullfinch.

Presently there came the sound of a motor-car in the little street below. And almost at once the landlady appeared. For such an abrupt woman, she entered very softly

'Here he is,' she whispered

I went out and found a gentleman, perhaps sixty years of age, in a black coat, buff waistcoat, gold watch-chain, light trousers, patent-leather boots, and a wonderfully shining hat. His face was plump and red, with a glossy grey moustache, indeed, he seemed to shine everywhere, save in the eyes, which were of a dull and somewhat liverish hue.

'Mr Jackson?'

'The same. How is the little old chap?'

Opening the door of the next room, which I knew was always empty, I beckoned Mr Jackson in.

'He's really very ill; I'd better tell you what he wants to see you about.'

He looked at me with that air of 'You can't get at me—whoever you may be,' which belongs to the very successful.

'Right-o!' he said. 'Well?'

I described the situation. 'He seems to think,' I ended, 'that you'll be kind enough to charge yourself with his strays, in case he should die.'

Mr Jackson prodded the unpainted washstand with his gold-headed cane.

'Is he really going to kick it?'

'I'm afraid so; he's nothing but skin, bone and spirit, as it is.'

'H'm! Stray cats, you say, and a bird! Well, there's no accounting. He was always a cracky little chap. So that's it. When I got the letter I wondered what the deuce! We pay him his five quid a quarter regular to this day. To tell truth, he deserved it. Thirty years he was at our shop; never missed a night. First-rate flute he was. He ought never to have given it up, though I always thought it showed a bit of heart in him. If a man don't look after number one, he's as good as gone, that's what I've always found. Why, I was no more than he was when I started. Shouldn't have been worth a plum if I'd gone on his plan, that's certain.' And he gave that profound chuckle which comes from the very stomach of success. 'We were having a rocky time at the Harmony, had to cut down everything we could—music, well, that came first. Little old Moronelli, as we used to call him—old Italian days before English names came in, you know—he was far the best of the flutes; so I went to him and said "Look here, Moronelli, which of these other boys had better go?" "Oh!" he said—I

remember his funny little old mug now—"has one of them to go, Mr Jackson? Timminsa"—that was the elder—"he's a wife and family; and Smetoni"—Smith, you know—"he's only a boy. Times are bad for flutes" "I know it's a bit hard," I said, "but this theatre's goin' to be run much cheaper; one of 'em's got to get." "Oh!" he said, "dear me!" he said. What a funny little old chap it was! Well—what do you think? Next day I had his resignation. Give you my word I did my best to turn him. Why, he was sixty then if he was a day—at sixty a man don't get jobs in a hurry. But, not a bit of it! All he'd say was. "I shall get a place all right!" But that's it, you know—he never did. Too long in one shop. I heard by accident he was on the rocks; that's how I make him that allowance. But that's the sort of hopeless little old chap he is—no idea of himself Cats! Why not? I'll take his old cats on; don't let him worry about that I'll see to his bird, too. If I can't give 'em a better time than ever they have here, it'll be funny! And looking round the little empty room, he again uttered that profound chuckle "Why, he was with us at the Harmony thirty years—that's time, you know, I made my fortune in it."

'I'm sure,' I said, 'it'll be a great relief to him'

'Oh! Ah! That's all right. You come down to my place—he handed me a card. "Mr Cyril Porteous Jackson, Ultima Thule, Wimbledon"—and see how I fix 'em up. But if he's really going to kick it, I'd like

to have a look at the little old chap, just for old times' sake.'

We went, as quietly as Mr Jackson's bright boots would permit, into his room, where the landlady was sitting gazing angrily at the cats. She went out without noise, flouncing her head as much as to say . ' Well, now you can see what I have to go through, sitting up here. I never get out.'

Our little old friend was still in that curious stupor. He seemed unconscious, but his blue eyes were not closed, staring brightly out before them at things we did not see. With his silvery hair and his flushed frailty, he had an unearthly look. After standing perhaps three minutes at the foot of the bed, Mr Jackson whispered.

' Well, he does look queer. Poor little old chap ! You tell him from me I'll look after his cats and bird ; he needn't worry And now, I think I won't keep the car Makes me feel a bit throaty, you know. Don't move ; he might come to.'

And leaning all the weight of his substantial form on those bright and creaking toes, he made his way to the door, flashed at me a diamond ring, whispered hoarsely :

So long ! That'll be all right ' and vanished. And soon I heard the whirring of his car and just saw the top of his shiny hat travelling down the little street.

Some time I sat on there, wanting to deliver that message. An uncanny vigil in the failing light, with those five cats—yes, five at least—lying or sitting

against the walls, staring like sphinxes at their motionless protector. I could not make out whether it was he in his stupor with his bright eyes that fascinated them, or the bullfinch perched on his pillow, who they knew perhaps might soon be in their power. I was glad when the landlady came up and I could leave the message with her.

When she opened the door to me next day at six o'clock I knew that he was gone. There was about her that sorrowful, unmistakable importance, that peculiar mournful excitement, which hovers over houses where death has entered.

'Yes,' she said, 'he went this morning. Never came round after you left. Would you like to see him?'

We went up.

He lay, covered with a sheet, in the darkened room. The landlady pulled the window-curtains apart. His face, as white now almost as his silvery head, had in the sunlight a radiance like that of a small, bright angel gone to sleep. No growth of hair, such as comes on most dead faces, showed on those frail cheeks that were now smooth and lineless as porcelain. And on the sheet above his chest the bullfinch sat, looking into his face.

The landlady let the curtains fall, and we went out.

'I've got the cats in here'—she pointed to the room where Mr Jackson and I had talked—'all ready for that gentleman when he sends. But that little bird, I don't know what to do ; he won't let me catch him, and there he sits. It makes me feel all funny '

It had made me feel all funny, too

‘He hasn’t left the money for his funeral Dreadful, the way he never thought about himself. ‘I’m glad I kept him, though.’ And, not to my astonishment, she suddenly began to cry.

A wire was sent to Mr Jackson, and on the day of the funeral I went down to ‘Ultima Thule’, Wimbledon, to see if he had carried out his promise

He had. In the grounds, past the vinery, an out-house had been cleaned and sanded, with cushions placed at intervals against the wall, and a little trough of milk. Nothing could have been more suitable or luxurious.

‘How’s that?’ he said. ‘I’ve done it thoroughly.’ But I noticed that he looked a little glum.

‘The only thing,’ he said, ‘is the cats. First night they seemed all right; and the second there were three of ‘em left. But today the gardener tells me there’s not the ghost of one anywhere. It’s not for want of feeding. They’ve had tripe, and liver, and milk—as much as ever they liked. And cod’s heads, you know—they’re very fond of them. I must say it’s a bit of a disappointment to me.’

As he spoke a sandy cat which I perfectly remembered, for it had only half its left ear, appeared in the doorway, and stood, crouching, with its green eyes turned on us, then, hearing Mr Jackson murmur, ‘Puss, puss!’ it ran for its life, slinking almost into the ground, and vanished among some shrubs.

Mr Jackson sighed. 'Perversity of the brutes!' he said. He led me back to the house through a conservatory full of choice orchids. A gilt bird-cage was hanging there, one of the largest I had ever seen, replete with every luxury the heart of bird could want.

'Is that for the bullfinch?' I asked him.

'Oh!' he said, 'didn't you know? The little beggar wouldn't let himself be caught, and the second morning, when they went up, there he lay on the old chap's body, dead. I thought it was very touching.' But I kept the cage hung up for you to see that I should have given him a good time here. Oh, yes, "Ultima Thule" would have done him well!'

And from a bright leather case Mr Jackson offered me a cigar

The question I had long been wishing to ask him slipped out of me then.

'Do you mind telling me why you called your house "Ultima Thule"?''

'Why?' he said. 'Found it on the gate. Think it's rather distingué, don't you?' and he uttered his profound chuckle.

'First-rate. The whole place is the last word in comfort.'

'Very good of you to say so, he said. 'I've laid out a goodish bit on it. A man must have a warm corner to end his days in. "Ultima Thule", as you say—it isn't bad. There's success about it, somehow'

And with that word in my ears, and in my eyes a vision of the little old fellow in *his* 'Ultima Thule', with the bullfinch lying dead on a heart that had never known success, I travelled back to town

XII MR STRENBERRY'S TALE

BY J. B. PRIESTLEY

From Four in Hand

MR Priestley is very well known as a novelist and short story writer. His most vivacious novel is *The Good Companions*. All his work shows a liking for sketching queer characters, and 'Mr Strenberry's Tale' is an interesting example of his power in this way. He creates a very dull character in a drab everyday English setting and puts into his mouth an extraordinary story. This mingling of the everyday and the fantastic is difficult, but Mr Priestley succeeds in making both parts of his story believable. The parts are not without connexion: for the unsuccessful, frustrated Mr Strenberry has spent his life in touch with learning and ideas. It is not incredible that on a lovely afternoon in most beautiful countryside the better side of him should be for a little while released and all his struggles for knowledge resolve themselves into his fantastic vision.

'AND thank you,' said the landlady, with the mechanical cheerfulness of her kind. She pushed across the counter one shilling and four coppers, which all contrived to get wet on the journey. 'Yes, it's quiet enough. Sort of weather to bring them in too, though it's a bit early yet for our lot. Who's in the Private Bar?' She craned her fat little neck, peered across the other side, and then returned, looking very confidential.

Only one. But he's one of our reg'lars. A bit too reg'lar, if you ask me, Mr Strenberry is.'

I put down my glass, and glanced out, through the open door. All I could see was a piece of wet road. The rain was falling now with that precision which suggests it will go on for ever. It was darker too.

And who is Mr Strenberry? 'I inquired, merely for want of something better to do. It did not matter to me who Mr Strenberry was.

The landlady leaned forward a little. 'He's the school-master from down the road,' she replied, in a delighted whisper. 'Been here—oh, lemme see—it must be four years, might be five. Came from London here. Yes, that's where he came from, London'

I said nothing. There did not seem to be anything to say. So I merely nodded, took another sip, and filled a pipe.

The landlady glanced at me with a faint reproach in her silly prominent eyes. 'And he's queer is Mr Strenberry,' she added, with something like defiance. 'Oh yes, he's queer enough. Clever, y'know—in a sort of a way, book-learning and all that, if you follow my meanin'—but, well—he's queer.'

'You mean, he talks queerly?' I said, casually. Perhaps a man of ideas, Mr Strenberry.

'He might go a week, he might go a fortnight, and not a word—except "Good evening" or "Thank you", for he's always the gentleman in here, I must say—will you get out of him. Some of the lively ones

try to draw him out a bit, pull his leg, as you might say—but not a word. Then, all of a sudden, he'll let himself go; talk your head off. And you never heard such stuff. I don't say I've heard much of it myself because I haven't the time to listen to it and I can't be bothered with it, but some of the other customers have told me. If you ask me, it's a bit of a shame, the way they go on, because it's getting to be a case of —' And here she tapped her forehead significantly. 'Mind you, it may have been his queerness that started all his troubles, his wife leaving him and all that. There's several that knows him better than I do will tell you that. Brought it all on himself, they say. But it does seem a pity, doesn't it? '

She looked at me mournfully for about a second and a half, then became brisk and cheerful again. 'He's in there now,' she added, and bustled away to the other side of the bar, where two carters were demanding half-pints.

I went to the outer door and stood there a moment, watching the persistent rain. It looked as if I should not be able to make a move for at least half an hour. So I ordered another drink and asked the landlady to serve it in the Private Bar, where Mr Strenberry was hiding his queerness. Then I followed her and took a seat near the window, only a few feet away from Mr Strenberry.

He was sitting there behind a nearly empty glass, with an unlighted stump of cigarette drooping from a

corner of his mouth. Everything about him was drooping. He was a tall, slack, straggling sort of fellow; his thin greying hair fell forward in front; his nose was long, with something pendulous about its reddened tip, his moustache drooped wearily; and even his chin fell away, as if in despair.

‘Miserable day,’ I told him.

‘It is,’ he said. ‘Rotten day.’ He had a high-pitched but slightly husky voice, and I imagined that its characteristic tone would probably be querulous.

There was silence then, or at least nothing but the sound of the rain outside and the murmur of voices from the bar. I stared at the Highlanders and the hunting men who, from various parts of the room, invited you to try somebody’s whisky and somebody else’s port.

‘Got a match?’ said Mr Strenberry, after fumbling in his pockets

I handed him my matchbox and took the opportunity of moving a little nearer. It was obvious that that stump of cigarette would not last him more than half a minute, so I offered him my cigarette case too.

‘Very quiet in here,’ I remarked.

‘For once,’ he replied, a kind of weak sneer lighting up his face. ‘Lucky for us too. There are more fools in this town than in most, and they all come in here. Lot of loud-mouthed idiots. I won’t talk to ‘em, won’t waste my breath on ‘em. They think there’s something wrong with me here. They *would*.’ He carefully

drained his glass, set it down, then pushed it away.

I hastened to finish my glass of bitter. Then I made a pretence of examining the weather. 'Looks as if I shall have to keep under cover for another quarter of an hour or so,' I said carelessly. 'I'm going to have another drink. Won't you join me?'

After a little vague humming and spluttering, he said he would, and thanked me. He asked for a double whisky and a small soda.

'And so you find the people here very stupid?' I said, after we had taken toll of our fresh supply of drink. 'They often are in these small towns.'

'All idiots,' he muttered. 'Not a man with an educated mind amongst them. But then—education! It's a farce, that's all it is, a farce. I come in here—I must go somewhere, you know—and I sit in a corner and say nothing. I know what they're beginning to think. Oh, I've seen them—nudging, you know, giving each other the wink. I don't care. One time I would have cared. Now I don't. It doesn't matter. Nothing matters, really.'

I objected mildly to this pessimism.

'I know,' he went on, looking at me sombrely. 'You needn't tell me. I can see you're an intelligent man, so it's different. But you can't argue with me, and I'll tell you why. You see, you don't know what I know. Oh, I don't care if they do think I'm queer. I *am* queer. And so would you be if you'd seen what I've seen. They wouldn't because they wouldn't have the

sense . . .' His voice trailed away. He shrugged his thin sloping shoulders. His face took on a certain obstinate look that you often see on the faces of weak men. Evidently he thought he had said too much.

I was curious now. 'I don't see what you mean,' I began. 'No doubt you've had unpleasant experiences, but then most of us have at some time or other.' I looked at him expectantly.

'I don't mean that,' he said, raising his voice and adding a touch of scorn. 'This is different. You wouldn't understand, unless I told you it all. Even then you mightn't. It's difficult. Oh, what's the use!' He finished his whisky in one quick gulp.

'Well, I wish you'd tell me.'

Doubtfully, mournfully, he examined my face, then he stared about the room, pulling his straggling and drooping moustache. 'Could I have another cigarette?' he asked, finally. When he had lit it, he blew out a cloud of smoke, then looked at me again.

'I've seen something nobody else has seen,' said Mr Strenberry. 'I've seen the end of it all, all this,' he waved a hand and gave a bitter little laugh, 'building houses, factories, education, public health, churches, drinking in pubs, getting children, walking in fields, everything, every mortal blessed thing. That's what I've seen, a glimpse anyhow. Finish! Finish! The End!'

'It sounds like doomsday,' I told him.

'And that's what it was,' cried Mr Strenberry, his

face lighting up strangely. 'Anyhow, that's what it amounted to. I can't think about anything else. And you couldn't either, if you'd been there. I've gone back to it, thought about it, thought round and round it, oh, thousands of times! Do you know Opperton Heath? You do? Well that's where it happened, nearly three years ago. That's all, three years ago I'd gone up there for a walk and to have a look at the birds. I used to be very interested in birds—my God, I've dropped that now—and there are one or two rare kinds up on the Heath there. You know what it's like—lonely. I hadn't met a soul all afternoon. That's the worst of it. If there'd only been somebody else there —'

He broke off, took up his smouldering cigarette, put it down again and stared in front of him. I kept quiet, afraid that a chance word might suddenly shut him up altogether.

'It was a warm afternoon,' he said, beginning again as abruptly as he had stopped, 'and I was lying on the grass, smoking. I remember I was wondering whether to hurry back and get home in time for tea or to stay where I was and not bother about tea. And I wish to God I'd decided to go back, before it happened. But I didn't. There I was, warm, a bit drowsy, just looking at the Heath. Not a soul in sight. Very quiet. If I could write poetry, I'd write a poem about the Heath as I saw it then, before the thing happened. It's all I would write too. The last five

minutes there.' He broke off again, and I believe there were tears in his eyes. He looked a figure of maudlin self-pity, but nevertheless it may have been the lost peace and beauty of the world that conjured up those tears. I did not know then. I do not know now.

'Then I saw something,' said Mr Strenberry. 'It was a sort of disturbance in the air, not fifty yards from where I was. I didn't take much notice at first, because you get that flickering on a warm day up there. But this went on. I can't describe it properly, not to make you see it. But in a minute or two, you couldn't help noticing it. Like a thin revolving column of air. A waterspout made of air, if you see what I mean.' And there was something dark, something solid, in the centre of it. I thought it must have something to do with a meteor. I got up and went up closer, cautiously, you know, taking no chances. It didn't seem to be affecting anything else. There was no wind or anything. Everything was as quiet as it was before. But this column of air was more definite now, though I can't exactly explain how it came to look so definite. But you knew it was there all right, like seeing one piece of glass against another piece. Only there was movement in this, and faster than the fastest piece of machinery you ever set eyes on. And that dark thing in the centre was solid every second. I went closer still. And then the movement inside the column—like a glassy sort of pillar it was, though that doesn't quite give you the idea—stopped, though there was still a

flickering and whirling on the outside. I could see that dark thing plainly now. It was a man—a sort of man.'

Mr Strenberry shut his eyes, put his hands up to them, and leaned forward on his elbows. In the quiet that followed, I could hear two fellows laughing in the bar outside. They were shouting something about a litter of pigs.

'He was a lightish greeny-blue in colour, this man,' Mr Strenberry continued, 'and the same all over. He'd no clothes on, but I got the idea that he'd a very tough skin, leathery, y'know. It shone a bit too. He'd no hair on him at all, and didn't look as if he'd shaved it all off but as if he'd never had any. He was bigger than me, bigger than you, but no giant. I should say he was about the size and figure of one of your big heavyweight boxers—except for his head. He'd a tremendous head—and of course as bald as an egg—and a wonderful face. I can see it now. It was flattish, like some of the faces of the Egyptian statues in the British Museum, but what you noticed the minute you saw it, were the eyes. They were more like a beautiful woman's eyes than a man's, very big and soft, y'know, but bigger and softer than any woman's eyes—and such a colour, a kind of dark purple. Full of intelligence too. Blazing with it, I knew that at once. I'm not saying this because of what I learned afterwards. I saw it at once. You couldn't mistake it. This greeny-blue hairless man knew a million things we'd never heard of, and

you could see it in his eyes. Well, there he was, and he stared at me and I stared at him.'

Go on,' I said, for Mr Strenberry had stopped and was now busy staring at me.

' This is the part you've got to try and understand,' he cried, excitedly. ' You see, this queer revolving cylinder of air was between us, and if it had been glass two feet thick it couldn't have separated us any better. I couldn't get at him. I don't say I tried very hard at first; I was too surprised and frightened. But I did try to get nearer after a minute or two, but I couldn't, and I can't possibly explain to you—no, not if I tried for a week—how I was stopped. Call it a transparent wall, if you like, but that doesn't give you the idea of it. Anyhow, it doesn't matter about me. The point is, he couldn't get out, and he obviously knew more about it than I did and he was trying desperately hard. He'd got some sort of little instrument in each hand—I could see them flash—and he kept bringing these together. He was terribly agitated. But he couldn't get out. He'd stopped the inside of this column revolving, as I said, but apparently he couldn't stop the outside, which was whirling and whirling just as fast as ever.'

' I've asked myself thousands of times,' Mr Strenberry went on, more reflectively now, ' what would have happened if he had got out. Would he have ruled the whole world, knowing so much more than we do? Or would these fools have shoved him into a cage, made a

show of him, and finally killed him? Though I don't imagine they could have done that, not with this man. And then again, could he have existed at all once he had got out? I don't mean just microbes and things, though they might easily have killed him off, because I don't suppose his body knew anything about such a germ-ridden atmosphere as ours. No, I don't mean that. This is the point. If he'd got out, really burst into this twentieth-century world, he might have stopped existing at all, just vanished into nothing, because after all this twentieth-century isn't just a date, it's also a condition, a state of things, and—you see—it doesn't include him. Though, of course, in a sense it does—or it did—because there he was, on the Heath that day.'

'I'm afraid I don't follow all this,' I said. 'But go on, perhaps it will come clearer.'

Mr Strenberry leaned forward and fixed me with his little boyled eyes. 'Don't you see, this man had come from the future? Fellows like H. G. Wells have always been writing about us taking a jump into the future, to have a look at our distant descendants, but of course we don't. We can't, we don't know enough. But what about them, taking a jump into the past, to have a look at *us*? That's far more likely, when you come to think of it. But I don't mean that is what this man was doing. He was trying to do more than that. If you ask me, they'd often taken a peep at us, and at our great-great-grandparents, and for that matter at our great-great-grandchildren too. But he wasn't just

doing that. He was trying to get out, to escape from his own time altogether '.

I drew in a long breath, then blew it out again, slowly. 'Don't you think I'm merely guessing that,' cried Mr Strenberry, 'because I'm not. I *know*. And I know because he told me. I don't mean to say we talked. As a matter of fact, I did try shouting at him—asking him who he was and where he'd come from, and all that—but I don't think he heard me, and if he did, he certainly didn't understand. But don't make any mistake—he saw me all right. He looked at me just as I looked at him. He made a sign or two, and might have made more if he hadn't been so busy with those instruments and so desperately agitated. He didn't shout at me, never opened his lips. But he *thought* at me. That's the only way I can describe it. Messages from him arrived in my head, and turned themselves into my own words, and even little pictures. And it was horrible—horrible, I tell you. Everything was finished, and he was trying to escape. The only way he could do it was to try and jump back into the past, out of the way. There wasn't much of the world left, fit to live in. Just one biggish island, not belonging to any of the continents we know—they'd all gone, long ago. I don't know the date. That never came through, and if it had, I don't suppose it would have told me much. But it was a long time ahead—perhaps twenty thousand years, perhaps fifty thousand, perhaps more—I don't know. What I do know is that this man wasn't

anybody very important, just a sort of minor assistant in some kind of laboratory where they specialized in time experiments, quite a low-class fellow among his own kind, though he would have seemed a demigod to me and you. And I knew that while he was so terrified that he was frantic in his attempt to escape, at the same time he was ashamed of himself, too—felt he was a kind of dodger, you see. But even then, what was happening was so ghastly that he'd never hesitated at all. He had run into the laboratory or whatever it was, and just had time to jump back through the ages. He was in terror. He didn't show it as we might, but I tell you—his mind was *screaming*. Some place—a city, I think it was—had been entirely destroyed, and everything else was going too, everything that had once been human. No words came into my mind to describe what it was that was destroying everything and terrifying him. Perhaps I hadn't any words that would fit in. All I got were some little pictures, very blurred, just like bits of a nightmare. There were great black things rolling about, just wiping everything out. Not like anything you've ever seen. You couldn't give them a shape.

Here Mr Strenberry, leaned further forward still, grasped my coat sleeve, and lowered his face.

'They weren't beasts or huge insects even,' he whispered. 'They weren't anything you could put a name to. I don't believe they belonged to this world at all. They came from some other place, from another

planet perhaps. Don't you see, it was all finished here. They were blotting it out, great rolling black things—oh, horrible! Just imagine what he felt, this man, who had just managed to escape from them, but now couldn't get out, into this world and time of ours. Because he couldn't, that was the awful thing. He tried and tried, but it couldn't be done. And he hadn't long to try either, I knew that. Because of what was happening at the other end, you see. I tell you, I stood there, looking at him, with his thoughts buzzing round my own head, and the sweat was streaming down my face. I was terrified too, in a panic. And then he was in an agony of fear, and so was I. It was all up. The inside of that column of air began revolving again, just as it had done when it first came, and then I couldn't see him distinctly. Only his eyes. Just those eyes, staring out of the swirl. And then, I saw something. I swear I did. Something black. Just a glimpse. That's all. A bit of one of those things, getting hold of him—the last man left. That's what it must have been, though how I came to see it, I don't quite know, but I've worked it out this way and that way, and it seems to me—'

'A-ha, who have we here,' cried a loud, cheerful voice. 'How's things, Mr Strenberry?'

Two red-faced men had just entered the room. They grinned at my companion, then winked at one another.

'A nasty day, Mr Strenberry,' said the other fellow.

'What do you say?'

Mr Strenberry, who appeared to have crumpled up at their approach, merely muttered something in reply. Then, giving me a hasty glance, in which shame and despair and scorn were mingled, he suddenly rose and shuffled out of the room.

The two newcomers looked at one another, laughed, and then settled into their corner. The landlady appeared with their drinks. I stood up and looked out of the window. The downpour had dwindled to a few scattered drops, brightening in the sunlight.

'I seen you talking to Mr Strenberry,' the landlady said to me. 'Least, I seen him talking to you. Got him going, too, you did. He's a queer one, isn't he? Didn't I tell you he was a queer one? Telling you one of his tales, I'll be bound. Take no notice of him, mister. You can't believe a single word he says. We found that out long since. That's why he doesn't want to talk to us any more. He knows we've got a pinch of salt ready, Mr Strenberry does.'

XIII MR ODDY

BY HUGH WALPOLE

From *All Soul's Night*

HERE IS a story by a famous literary figure in London today made from some typical London ingredients. First, a hero, the usual young man down from the University confidently beginning his literary career. Second, the Chelsea society in which he lived and was young enough to respect. Third, a man of mystery. Fourth, just the merest outline of a love story, told with a smile. Excellent ingredients, and they are so well mixed that we read the story with relish right to its delightful end.

THIS may seem to many people an old-fashioned story; it is perhaps for that reason that I tell it. I can recover here, it may be, for myself something of the world that is already romantic, already beyond one's reach, already precious for the things that one might have got out of it and didn't.

London of but a few years before the war! What a commonplace to point out its difference from the London of today and to emphasize the tiny period of time that made that difference!

But I have no wish to be sentimental about it, there is a new London which is just as interesting to its new

citizens as the old London was to myself. It is my age that is the matter, before the war one was so *very* young.

I like, though, to try and recapture that time, and so, as a simple way to do it, I seize upon a young man, Tommy Brown we will call him. I don't know where Tommy Brown may be now; that Tommy Brown who lived as I did in two very small rooms in Glebe Place, Chelsea, who enjoyed hugely the sparse but economical meals provided so elegantly by two charming ladies at 'The Good Intent' down by the river, that charming hostelry whence looking through the bow windows you could see the tubby barges go floating down the river and the thin outline of Whistler's Battersea Bridge, and in the small room itself were surrounded by who knows what geniuses in the lump, geniuses of Art and Letters, of the Stage and of the Law.

For Tommy Brown in those days life was *Paradisal*.

He had come boldly from Cambridge to throw himself upon London's friendly bosom; despite all warnings to the contrary he was certain that it would be friendly; how could it be otherwise to so charming, so brilliant, so unusually attractive a young man? For Tommy was conceited beyond all that his youth warranted, conceited indeed without any reason at all.

He had, it is true, secured the post of reviewer to one of the London daily papers; this seemed to him when he looked back in later years a kind of miracle, but at the

time no miracle at all, simply a just appreciation of his extraordinary talents. There was also reposing in one of the publisher's offices at that moment the manuscript of a novel, a novel that appeared to him of astonishing brilliance, written in the purest English, sparkling with wit, tense with drama.

These things were fine and reassuring enough, but there was more than that; he felt in himself the power to rise to the greatest heights; he could not see how anything could stop him, it was his destiny.

This pride of his might have suffered some severe shocks were it not that he spent all of his time with other young gentlemen quite as conceited as himself. I have heard talk of the present young generation and its agreeable consciousness of its own merits, but I doubt if it is anything in comparison with that little group of fifteen years ago. After all, the war has intervened—however young we may be and however greatly we may pretend this is an unstable world and for the moment heroics have departed from it. But for Tommy Brown and his friends the future was theirs and nobody could prevent it. Something pathetic in that as one looks back

Tommy was not really so unpleasant a youth as I have described him—to his elders he must have appeared a baby, and his vitality at least they could envy. After all, why check his confidence? Life would do that heavily enough in its own good time.

Tommy, although he had no money and no prospects, was already engaged to a young woman, Miss Alice

Smith Alice Smith was an artist sharing with a girl friend a Chelsea studio, and she was as certain of her future as Tommy was of his.

They had met at a little Chelsea dance, and two days after the meeting they were engaged. She had no parents who mattered, and no money to speak of, so that the engagement was the easiest thing in the world.

Tommy, who had been in love before many times, knew, as he told his friend Jack Robinson so often as to bore that gentleman severely, that this time at last he knew what love was. Alice ordered him about—with her at any rate his conceit fell away—she had read his novel and pronounced it old-fashioned, the severest criticism she could possibly have made, and she thought his reviews amateur. He suffered then a good deal in her company. When he was away from her he told himself and everybody else that her critical judgement was marvellous, her comprehension of all the Arts quite astounding, but he left her sometimes with a miserable suspicion that perhaps after all he was not going to do anything very wonderful and that he would have to work very hard indeed to rise to her astonishing standards.

It was in such a mood of wholesome depression that he came one beautiful spring April day from the A.B.C. shop where he had been giving his Alice luncheon, and found his way to an old bookshop on the river-side round the corner from Oakley Street. This shop was kept by a gentleman called Mr Burdett Coutts, and the grand

associations of his name gave him from the very first a sort of splendour.

It was one of those old shops of which there are, thank God, still many examples surviving in London, in which the room was so small and the books so many that to move a step was to imperil your safety. Books ran in thick, tight rows from floor to ceiling everywhere, were piled in stacks upon the ground, and hung in perilous heaps over chairs and window ledges.

Mr Burdett Coutts himself, a very stout and grizzled old man enveloped always in a grey shawl, crouched behind his spectacles in a far corner and took apparently no interest in anything save that he would snap the price at you if you brought him a volume and timorously inquired. He ate biscuits which stuck in his grizzly beard, and wrote perpetually in a large moth-eaten ledger which was supposed by his customers to contain all the secrets of the universe.

It was just because Mr Coutts never interfered with you that Tommy Brown loved his shop so dearly. If he had a true genuine passion that went far deeper than all his little superficial vanities and egotisms, it was his passion for books—books of any kind.

He had at this time no fine taste—all was fish that came to his net. The bundles of Thackeray and Dickens, parts tied up carelessly in coarse string, the old broken-backed volumes of Radcliffe and Barham and Galt, the red and gold Colburn's novelists, all these were exciting to him, just as exciting as though they

had been a first Gray's *Elegy* or an original *Robinson Crusoe*.

He had, too, a touching weakness for the piles of fresh and neglected modern novels that lay in their discarded heaps on the dusty floor; young though he was, he was old enough to realize the pathos of these so short a time ago fresh from the bursting presses, so eagerly cherished through months of anxious watching by their fond authors, so swiftly forgotten, dead almost before they were born.

So he browsed, moving like a panting puppy with inquisitive nose from stack to stack with a gesture of excitement, tumbling a whole racket of books about his head, looking then anxiously to see whether the old man would be angry with him, and realizing for the thousandth time that the old man never was

He had a volume in his hand, when he was aware that someone had entered the shop and was standing looking over his shoulder.

He turned slowly and saw someone who at first sight seemed vaguely familiar, so familiar that he was plunged into confusion at once by the sense that he ought to say 'How do you do?' but could not accurately place him. The gentleman also seemed to know him very well, for he said in a most friendly way, 'Ah, yes, the "Nineties", a very fruitful period'

Tommy stammered something, put down the book, moved a little, and pulled about him a sudden shower of volumes. The room was filled with the racket of their

tumbling, and a cloud of dust thickened about them, creeping into eyes and mouth and nose.

‘I’m terribly sorry,’ Tommy stammered, and then, looking up, was sorry the more when he saw how extremely neat and tidy the gentleman was and how terribly the little accident must distress him.

Tommy’s friend must have been between sixty and seventy years of age, nearer seventy perhaps than sixty, but his black hair was thick and strong and stood up *en brosse* from a magnificent broad forehead. Indeed, so fine was the forehead and the turn of the head that the face itself was a little disappointing, being so round and chubby and amiable as to be almost babyish. It was not a weak face, however, the eyes being large and fine and the chin strong and determined.

The figure of this gentleman was short and thick-set and inclined to stoutness; he had the body of a prize-fighter now resting on his laurels. He was very beautifully clothed in a black coat and waistcoat, pepper-and-salt trousers, and he stood leaning a little on a thick ebony cane, his legs planted apart, his whole attitude that of one who was accustomed to authority. He had the look of a magistrate, or even of a judge, and had his face been less kindly Tommy would have said good-day, nodded to Mr Burdett Coutts, and departed, but that was a smile difficult to resist.

‘Dear me,’ the gentleman said, ‘this is a very dusty shop. I have never been here before, but I gather by

the way that you knock the books about that it's an old friend of yours.'

Tommy giggled in a silly fashion, shifted from foot to foot, and then, desiring to seem very wise and learned, proved himself only very young and foolish.

'The "Nineties" are becoming quite romantic,' he said in his most authoritative voice, 'now that we're getting a good distance from them.'

'Ah, you think so!' said the gentleman courteously; 'that's interesting. I'm getting to an age now, I'm afraid, when nothing seems romantic but one's own youth and, ah, dear me! that was a very long time ago.'

This was exactly the way that kindly old gentlemen were supposed to talk, and Tommy listened with becoming attention.

'In my young day,' his friend continued, 'George Eliot seemed to everybody a magnificent writer a little heavy in hand for these days, I'm afraid. Now who is the God of your generation, if it isn't impertinent to inquire?'

Tommy shifted again from foot to foot. Who was the God of his generation? If the truth must be told, in Tommy's set there were no Gods, only young men who might be Gods if they lived long enough.

'Well,' said Tommy awkwardly, 'Hardy, of course—er—it's difficult to say, isn't it?'

'Very difficult,' said the gentleman.

There was a pause then, which Tommy concluded by

hinting that he was afraid that he must move forward to a very important engagement

‘ ‘ May I walk with you a little way ? ’ ’ asked the gentleman very courteously, ‘ such a very beautiful afternoon.’

Once outside in the beautiful afternoon air everything was much easier; Tommy regained his self-confidence, and soon was talking with his accustomed ease and freedom. There was nothing very alarming in his friend after all, he seemed so very eager to hear everything that Tommy had to say. He was strangely ignorant too; he seemed to be interested in the Arts, but to know very little about them; certain names that were to Tommy household words were to this gentleman quite unknown. Tommy began to be a little patronizing. They parted at the top of Oakley Street.

‘ I wonder if you’d mind,’ the gentleman said, ‘ our meeting again? The fact is, that I have very little opportunity of making friends with your generation. There are so many things that you could tell me. I am afraid it may be tiresome for you to spend an hour or two with so ancient a duffer as myself, but it would be very kind of you ’

Tommy was nothing if not generous, he said that he would enjoy another meeting very much. Of course he was very busy and his spare hours were not many, but a walk another afternoon could surely be managed. They made an appointment, they exchanged names; the gentleman’s name was Mr Alfred Oddy.

That evening, in the middle of a hilarious Chelsea party, Tommy suddenly discovered to his surprise that it would please him very much to see Mr Oddy walk in through the door.

Although it was a hilarious party Tommy was not very happy ; for one thing, Spencer Russell, the novelist, was there and showed quite clearly that he didn't think Tommy very interesting. Tommy had been led up and introduced to him, had said one or two things that seemed to himself very striking, but Spencer Russell had turned his back almost at once and entered into eager conversation with somebody else

This wasn't very pleasant, and then his own beloved Alice was behaving strangely ; she seemed to have no eyes nor ears for anyone in the room save Spencer Russell, and this was the stranger in that only a week or so before she had in public condemned Spencer Russell's novels, utterly and completely, stating that he was written out, had nothing to say, and was as good as dead. Tonight, however, he was not dead at all, and Tommy had the agony of observing her edge her way into the group surrounding him and then listen to him not only as though he were the fount of all wisdom, but an Adonis as well, which last was absurd seeing that he was fat and unwieldy and bald on the top of his head.

After a while Tommy came up to her and suggested that they should go, and received then the shock of his life when she told him that he could go if he liked, but

that he was not to bother her. And she told him this in a voice so loud that everybody heard and many people tittered.

He left in a fury and spent then a night that he imagined to be sleepless, although in truth he slept during most of it.

It was with an eagerness that surprised himself that he met Mr Oddy on the second occasion. He had not seen Alice for two days. He did not intend to be the one to apologize first; besides, he had nothing to apologize for; and yet during these two days there was scarcely a moment that he had not to restrain himself from running round to her studio and making it up.

When he met Mr Oddy at the corner of Oakley Street he was a very miserable young man. He was so miserable that in five minutes he was pouring out all his woes.

He told Mr Oddy everything, of his youth, his wonderful promise, and the extraordinary lack of appreciation shown to him by his relatives, of the historical novels that he had written at the age of anything from ten to sixteen and found only the cook for an audience, of his going to Cambridge, and his extraordinary development there so that he became Editor of *The Lion*, that remarkable but very short-lived literary journal, and the President of *The Bats*, the most extraordinary Essay Club that Cambridge had ever known, of how, alas, he took only a third in History owing to the perverseness of examiners, and so on and

so on, until he arrived in full flood at the whole history of his love for Alice, of her remarkable talents and beauty, but of her strange temper and arrogance and general feminine perverseness.

Mr Oddy listened to it all in the kindest way. There's no knowing where they walked that afternoon; they crossed the bridge and adventured into Battersea Park, and finally had tea in a small shop smelling of stale buns and liquorice drops. It was only as they turned homewards that it occurred to Tommy that he had been talking during the whole afternoon. He had the grace to see that an apology was necessary.

'I beg your pardon, sir,' he said, flushing a little, 'I'm afraid I have bored you dreadfully. The fact is, that this last quarrel with Alice has upset me very badly. What would you do if you were in my position?'

Mr Oddy sighed. 'The trouble is,' he said, 'that I realize only too clearly that I shall never be in your position again. My time for romance is over, or at least I get my romance now in other ways. It wasn't always so, there was a lady once beneath whose windows I stood night after night merely for the pleasure of seeing her candle outlined behind the blind.'

'And did she love you,' Tommy asked eagerly, 'as much as you loved her?'

'Nobody, my dear boy,' Mr Oddy replied, 'loves you as much as you love them; either they love you

more or they love you less. The first of these is often boring, the second always tragic. In the present case I should go and make it up; after all, happiness is always worth having, even at the sacrifice of one's pride. She seems to me a very charming young lady.'

'Oh, she is,' Tommy answered eagerly 'I'll take your advice, I'll go this very evening; in fact, if you don't mind, I think it would be rather a good time to find her in now.'

Mr Oddy smiled and agreed; they parted to meet another day.

On the third occasion of their meeting, which was only two days after the second, Tommy cared for his companion enough to wish to find out something about him.

His scene of reconciliation with his beautiful Alice had not been as satisfactory as he had hoped; she had forgiven him, indeed, but given him quite clearly to understand that she would stand none of his nonsense either now or hereafter. The satisfactory thing would have been for Tommy there and then to have left her, never to see her again; he would thus have preserved both his pride and his independence; but, alas, he was in love, terribly in love, and her indignation made her appear only the more magnificent

And so on this third meeting with his friend he was quite humble and longing for affection.

And then his curiosity was stirred Who was this handsome old gentleman, with his touching desire for

Tommy's companionship? There was an air about him that seemed to suggest that he was someone of importance in his own world; beyond this there was an odd sense that Tommy knew him in some way, had seen him somewhere; so on this third occasion Tommy came out with his questions.

Who was he? Was he married? What was his profession, or was he perhaps retired now? And another question that Tommy would have liked to have asked, and had not the impertinence, was as to why this so late interest in the Arts and combined with this interest this so complete ignorance?

Mr Oddy seemed to know a great deal about everything else, but in this one direction his questions were childish. He seemed never to have heard of the great Spencer Russell at all (which secretly gave Tommy immense satisfaction), and as for geniuses like Mumpus and Peter Arrogance and Samuel Bird, even when Tommy explained how truly great these men were, Mr Oddy appeared but little impressed.

'Well, at least,' Tommy burst out indignantly, 'I suppose you've read something by Henry Galleon? Of course he's a back number now, at least he is not modern if you know what I mean, but then he's been writing for centuries. Why, his first book came out when Trollope and George Eliot were still alive. Of course, between ourselves I think *The Roads*, for instance, a pretty fine book, but you should hear Spencer Russell go for it.'

No, Mr Oddy had never heard of Henry Galleon.

At last when they parted Mr Oddy had a request—one thing above all things that he would like would be to attend one of these evening gatherings with his young friend to hear these young men and women talk. He promised to sit very quietly in a corner—he wouldn't be in anybody's way.

Of course Tommy consented to take him; there would be one next week, a really good one; but in his heart of hearts he was a little shy. He was shy not only for himself but also for his friend.

During these weeks a strange and most unexpected affection had grown up in his heart for this old man; he really did like him immensely, he was so kind and gentle and considerate.

But he would be rather out of place with Spencer Russell and the others; he would probably say something foolish, and then the others would laugh. They were on the whole a rather ruthless set and were no respecters of persons.

However, the meeting was arranged; the evening came and with it Mr Oddy, looking just as he always did, quiet and gentle but rather impressive in some way or another. Tommy introduced him to his hostess, Miss Thelma Bennet, that well-known futuristic artist, and then carefully settled him down in a corner with Miss Bennet's aunt, an old lady who appeared occasionally on her niece's horizon but gave no trouble because she was stone deaf and cared only for knitting.

It was a lively evening, several of the bright spirits were there, and there was a great deal of excellent talk about literature. Every writer over thirty was completely condemned save for those few remaining who had passed eighty years of age and ceased to produce.

Spencer Russell especially was at his best; reputations went down before his vigorous fist like ninepins. He was so scornful that his brilliance was, as Alice Smith everywhere proclaimed, 'simply withering'. Every one came in for his lash, and especially Henry Galleon. There had been some article in some ancient monthly written by some ancient idiot suggesting that there was still something to be said for Galleon and that he had rendered some service to English literature. How Russell pulled that article to pieces! He even found a volume of Galleon's among Miss Bennet's books, took it down from the shelf and read extracts aloud to the laughing derision of the assembled company.

Then an odd thing occurred. Tommy, who loved to be in the intellectual swim, nevertheless stood up and defended Galleon. He defended him rather feebly, it is true, speaking of him as though he were an old man ready for the almshouse who nevertheless deserved a little consideration and pity. He flushed as he spoke, and the scorn with which they greeted his defence altogether silenced him. It silenced him the more because Alice Smith was the most scornful of them all;

she told him that he knew nothing and never would know anything, and she imitated his piping excited-treble, and then everyone joined in.

How he hated this to happen before Mr Oddy ! How humiliating after all the things that he had told his friend, the implications that he was generally considered to be one of England's most interesting young men, the implication above all that although she might be a little rough to him at times Alice really adored him and was his warmest admirer. She did not apparently adore him tonight, and when he went out at last with Mr Oddy into the wintry, rain-driven street it was all he could do to keep back tears of rage and indignation. Mr Oddy had, however, apparently enjoyed himself. He put his hand for a minute on the boy's shoulder.

' Good night, my dear boy,' he said ' I thought it very gallant of you to stand up for that older writer as you did : that needed courage I wonder,' he went on, ' whether you would allow me to come and take tea with you one day—just our two selves It would be a great pleasure for me '

And then, having received Tommy's invitation, he vanished into the darkness.

On the day appointed, Mr Oddy appeared punctually at Tommy's rooms. That was not a very grand house in Glebe Place where Tommy lived, and a very soiled and battered landlady let Mr Oddy in. He stumbled up the dark staircase that smelt of all the cabbage and all the beef and all the mutton ever consumed by

lodgers between these walls, up again two flights of stairs, until at last there was the weather-beaten door with Tommy's visiting-card nailed upon it. Inside was Tommy, a plate with little cakes, raspberry jam, and some very black-looking toast.

Mr Oddy, however, was appreciative of everything; especially he looked at the books. 'Why,' he said, 'you've got quite a number of the novels of that man you defended the other evening. I wonder you're not ashamed to have them if they're so out of date.'

'To tell you the truth,' said Tommy, speaking freely now that he was in his own castle, 'I like Henry Galleon awfully. I'm afraid I pose a good deal when I'm with those other men; perhaps you've noticed it yourself. Of course Galleon is the greatest novelist we've got, with Hardy and Meredith, only he's getting old, and everything that's old is out of favour with our set.'

'Naturally,' said Mr Oddy, quite approving, 'of course it is'

'I have got a photograph of Galleon,' said Tommy. 'I cut it out of a publisher's advertisement, but it was taken years ago.'

He went to his table, searched for a little and produced a small photograph of a very fierce-looking gentleman with a black beard.

'Dear me,' said Mr Oddy, 'he does look alarming!'

'Oh, that's ever so old,' said Tommy. 'I expect he's mild and soft now, but he's a great man all the

same; I'd like to see Spencer Russell write anything as fine as *The Roads* or *The Pattern in the Carpet*.' .

' They sat down to tea very happy and greatly pleased with one another.

' I do wish,' said Tommy, ' that you'd tell me something about yourself; we're such friends now, and I don't know anything about you at all.'

' I'd rather you didn't,' said Mr Oddy. ' You'd find it so uninteresting if you did; mystery's a great thing.'

' Yes,' said Tommy, ' I don't want to seem impertinent, and of course if you don't want to tell me anything you needn't, but—I know it sounds silly, but, you see, I like you most awfully. I haven't liked anybody so much for ever so long, except Alice, of course. I don't feel as though you were of another generation or anything; it's just as though we were the same age! '

Mr Oddy was enchanted. He put his hand on the boy's for a moment and was going to say something, when they were interrupted by a knock on the door, and the terrible-looking landlady appeared in the room. She apologized, but the afternoon post had come and she thought the young gentleman would like to see his letters. He took them, was about to put them down without opening them, when suddenly he blushed. ' Oh, from Alice,' he said. ' Will you forgive me a moment? '

' Of course,' said Mr Oddy.

The boy opened the letter and read it. It fell from his hand on to the table. He got up gropingly as though he could not see his way, and went to the window and stood there with his back to the room. There was a long silence.

‘Not bad news, I hope,’ said Mr Oddy at last.

Tommy turned round. His face was grey and he was biting his lips. ‘Yes,’ he answered, ‘she’s—gone off

‘Gone off?’ said Mr Oddy, rising from the table.

‘Yes,’ said Tommy, ‘with Russell. They were married at a registry office this morning.’

He half turned round to the window, then put his hands as though he would shield himself from some blow, then crumpled up into a chair, his head falling between his arms on the table.

Mr Oddy waited. At last he said: ‘Oh, I’m sorry, that’s dreadful for you!’

The boy struggled, trying to raise his head and speak, but the words would not come. Mr Oddy went behind him and put his hands on his shoulders.

‘You know,’ he said, ‘you mustn’t mind me. Of course, I’ll go if you like, but if you could think of me for a moment as your oldest friend, old enough to be your father, you know.’

Tommy clutched his sleeve, then, abandoning the struggle altogether, buried his head in Mr Oddy’s beautiful black waistcoat.

Later he poured his heart out. Alice was all that he had; he knew that he wasn’t any good as a writer, he

was a failure altogether; what he'd done he'd done for Alice, and now that she'd gone——

'Well, there's myself,' said Mr Oddy. 'What I mean is that you're not without a friend, and as for writing, if you only write to please somebody else, that's no use, you've got to write because you can't help it. There are too many writers in the world already for you to dare to add to their number unless you're simply compelled to. But there—I'm preaching. If it's any comfort to you to know, I went through just this same experience myself once—the lady whose candle I watched behind the blind. If you cared to, would you come and have dinner with me to-night at my home? Only the two of us, you know; but don't if you'd rather be alone.'

Tommy, clutching Mr Oddy's hand, said he would come.

About half-past seven that evening he had beaten up his pride. Even in the depth of his misery he saw that they would never have got on together, he and Alice. He was quickly working himself into a fine state of hatred of the whole female race, and this helped him—he would be a bachelor all his days, a woman-hater; he would preserve a glorious independence. How much better this freedom than a houseful of children and a bagful of debts.

Only, as he walked to the address that Mr Oddy had given him he held sharply away from him the memory of those hours that he had spent with Alice those hours

of their early friendship when the world had been so wonderful a place that it had seemed to be made entirely of golden sunlight. He felt that he was an old man indeed as he mounted the steps of Mr Oddy's house

It was a fine house in Eaton Square. Mr Oddy must be rich. He rang the bell, and a door was opened by a footman. He asked for Mr Oddy.

The footman hesitated a little, and then, smiling, said: 'Oh, yes, sir, will you come in?'

He left his coat in the fine hall, mounted a broad staircase, and then was shown into the finest library that he had ever seen. Books! Shelf upon shelf of books, and glorious books, editions de luxe and, as he could see with half an eye, rare first editions and those lovely bindings in white parchment and vellum that he so longed one day himself to possess. On the broad writing-table there was a large photograph of Meredith; it was signed in sprawling letters, 'George Meredith, 1887'. What could this mean? Mr Oddy, who knew nothing about literature, had been given a photograph by George Meredith and had this wonderful library! He stared bewildered about him.

A door at the far end of the library opened and an elegant young man appeared. 'Mr Galleon,' he said, 'will be with you in a moment. Won't you sit down?'

Mr Galleon! Henry Galleon! Instantly he saw it, remembered with horrid confusion his own ridiculous concerted talk, the abusive nonsense of Russell and the

rest. 'My God!' he whispered aloud, 'what he must be thinking!'

The door opened again and Mr Oddy appeared. Tommy Brown, his face crimson, stammered: 'It was a shame—if I'd only known!' and then, trying to stand up for himself, 'but I had that photograph and there was the beard.'

Mr Oddy laughed. 'The beard went long ago,' he said, 'I suppose it *was* a shame, but I was hemmed in here in my castle; I had to find out what you young people were like. I get tired of all this sometimes; nobody tells me the truth here. I have to go to you and your friends for that.'

So they went down to dinner together.

Yes, this is an old story. Its principal interest, perhaps, is that it's true. I was, you see, myself Tommy Brown.

CLASSICAL PROSE

XIV. ADVICE TO VILLAGERS

BY WILLIAM COBBETT

From *Cottage Economy*

THIS extract is taken from a series of pamphlets written for peasants and later printed together as *Cottage Economy*. The book is taken up with 'Information relative to the . . . keeping of Cows, Pigs, Bees, Ewes, Goats, Poultry, and Rabbits, and relative to other matters deemed useful in the conducting of the affairs of a Labourer's Family'. The paragraphs which follow are taken from the introduction, which shows Cobbett—in Chesterton's phrase—as 'the noblest English example of the noble calling of the agitator': and by agitator he means the man who has an incurable itch to persuade people to make themselves better. Cobbett flourished just over a hundred years ago, when the English peasant was as badly off as he has ever been, and he spent his enormous energies in writing to the peasant and at the peasant, about the peasant and for the peasant. He has therefore much to say that is apposite in India today ,

THE word *Economy*, like a great many others, has, in its application, been very much abused. It is generally used as if it meant parsimony, stinginess, or niggardliness; and, at best, merely the refraining from expending money. Hence misers and close-fisted men disguise their propensity and conduct under the name

of *economy*; whereas the most liberal disposition, a disposition precisely the contrary of that of the miser, is perfectly consistent with economy.

ECONOMY means *management*, and nothing more; and it is generally applied to the affairs of a house and family, which affairs are an object of the greatest importance, whether as relating to individuals or to a nation. A nation is made powerful and to be honoured in the world, not so much by the number of its people as by the ability and character of that people; and the ability and character of a people depend, in a great measure, upon the *economy* of the several families, which, all taken together, make up the nation. There never yet was, and never will be, a nation *permanently great*, consisting, for the greater part, of wretched and miserable families.

In every view of the matter, therefore, it is desirable that the families of which a nation consists should be happily off, and as this depends, in a great degree, upon the *management* of their concerns, the present work is intended to convey, to the families of the *labouring classes* in particular, such information as I think may be useful with regard to that management.

I lay it down as a maxim, that for a family to be happy, they must be well supplied with *food* and *raiment*. It is a sorry effort that people make to persuade others, or to persuade themselves, that they can be happy in a state of *want* of the necessities of life. The doctrines which fanaticism preaches. and

which teach men to be *content* with *poverty*, have a very pernicious tendency, and are calculated to favour tyrants by giving them passive slaves. To live well, to enjoy all things that make life pleasant, is the right of every man who constantly uses his strength judiciously and lawfully. It is to blaspheme God to suppose that he created men to be miserable, to hunger, thirst, and perish with cold, in the midst of that abundance which is the fruit of their own labour. Instead, therefore, of applauding 'happy poverty', which applause is so much the fashion of the present day, I despise the man that is *poor* and *contented*; for such content is a certain proof of a base disposition, a disposition which is the enemy of all industry, all exertion, all love of independence.

Let it be understood, however, that, by *poverty*, I mean *real want*, a real insufficiency of the food and raiment and lodging necessary to health and decency; and not that imaginary poverty, of which some persons complain. The man who, by his own and his family's labour, can provide a sufficiency of food and raiment, and a comfortable dwelling place, is not a *poor man*. There must be different ranks and degrees in every civil society, and, indeed, so it is even amongst the savage tribes. There must be different degrees of wealth; some must have more than others; and the richest must be a great deal richer than the least rich. But it is necessary to the very existence of a people, that nine out of ten should live wholly by the sweat

of their brow; and is it not degrading to human nature that all the nine-tenths should be called *poor*; and, what is still worse, *call themselves poor*, and be *contented* in that degraded state?

The laws, the economy, or management, of a state may be such as to render it impossible for the labourer, however skilful and industrious, to maintain his family in health and decency; and such has, for many years past, been the management of the affairs of this once truly great and happy land. A system of paper-money, the effect of which was to take from the labourer the half of his earnings, was what no industry and care could make head against. I do not pretend that this system was adopted *by design*. But, no matter for the *cause*; such was the effect.

Better times, however, are approaching. The labourer now appears likely to obtain that hire of which he is worthy; and, therefore, this appears to me to be the time to press upon him the *duty* of using his best exertions for the rearing of his family in a manner that must give him the best security for happiness to himself, his wife and children, and to make him, in all respects, what his forefathers were. The people of England have been famed, in all ages, for their *good living*, for the *abundance of their food*, and *goodness of their attire*. The old sayings about English roast beef and plum-pudding, and about English hospitality, had not their foundation in *nothing*. And, in spite of all refinements of sickly minds, it is

living amongst the people at large, which is the great test of good government, and the surest basis of national greatness and security.

If the labourer have his fair wages; if there be no false weights and measures, whether of money or of goods, by which he is defrauded; if the laws be equal in their effect upon all men, if he be called upon for no more than his due share of the expenses necessary to support the government and defend the country, he has no reason to complain. If the largeness of his family demand extraordinary labour and care, these are due from him to it. He is the cause of the existence of that family; and, therefore, he is not, except in cases of accidental calamity, to throw upon others the burden of supporting it. Besides, 'little children are as arrows in the hands of the giant, and blessed is the man that hath his quiver full of them'. This is to say, children, if they bring their *cares*, bring also their *pleasures* and *solid advantages*. They become, very soon, so many assistants and props to the parents, who, when old age comes on, are amply repaid for all the toils and all the cares that children have occasioned in their infancy. To be without sure and safe friends in the world makes life not worth having; and whom can we be so sure of as of our children? Brothers and sisters are a mutual support. We see them, in almost every case, grow up into prosperity, when they act the part that the impulses of nature prescribe. When cordially united, a father and sons, or a family of

brothers and sisters, may, in almost any state of life, set what is called misfortune at defiance.

These considerations are much more than enough to sweeten the toils and cares of parents, and to make them regard every additional child as an additional blessing. But, that children may be a blessing and not a curse, care must be taken of their *education*. This word has, of late years, been so perverted, so corrupted, so abused, in its application, that I am almost afraid to use it here. Yet I must not suffer it to be usurped by cant and tyranny. I must use it; but not without saying what I mean.

Education means *breeding up*, *bringing up*, or *rearing up*; and nothing more. This includes every thing with regard to the *mind* as well as the *body* of a child; but, of late years, it has been so used as to have no sense applied to it but that of *book-learning*, with which, nine times out of ten, it has nothing at all to do. It is, indeed, proper, and it is the duty of all parents to teach, or cause to be taught, their children as much as they can of books, *after*, and not *before*, all the measures are safely taken for enabling them to get their living by labour, or for *providing them a living without labour*, and that, too, out of the means obtained and secured by the parents out of their own income. The taste of the times is, unhappily, to give to children something of *book-learning*, with a view of placing them to live, in some way or other, *upon the labour of other people*. Very seldom, comparatively

speaking, has this succeeded, even during the wasteful public expenditure of the last thirty years; and, in the times that are approaching, it cannot, I thank God, succeed at all. When the project has failed, what disappointment, mortification, and misery, to both parent and child. The latter is spoiled as a labourer; his book-learning has only made him conceited: into some course of desperation he falls; and the end is but too often not only wretched but ignominious.

Understand me clearly here, however, for it is the duty of parents to give, if they be able, book-learning to their children, having *first* taken care to make them capable of earning their living by *bodily labour*.

XV. DREAM CHILDREN

BY CHARLES LAMB

From *Essays of Elia*

THIS is the simplest essay Charles Lamb wrote. It is simple description in simple English. This quality was necessary for the expression of the most delicate and poignant fancy that ever came from his pen. He began writing the *Essays of Elia* in 1820 when he was forty-five years old. The subject-matter was largely taken from recollections of twenty or thirty years before. This essay, written in 1822, in its brevity and simplicity collects memories of his extreme childhood, tributes to his brother and sister, and those dear hopes of a wife and children which never came true.

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that

the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts; till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining country; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, 'that would be foolish indeed'. And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neigh-

bourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman, so good indeed that she knew all the Psalter by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the country, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said 'those innocents would do her no harm'; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holydays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Caesars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till

the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such-like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed

willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their gr̄eat-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L—, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it

to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he, their poor uncle, must have been when the doctor took off his limb.—Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n; and as much as children could understand, explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial, meant in maidens—when suddenly turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: ‘We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing,

and dreams. 'We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name'—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

XVI. THE FIGHT

BY WILLIAM HAZLITT

From *Literary Remains of the Late William Hazlitt*,
Vol. II

No collection of our inheritance of English prose would be representative without a passage from Hazlitt. He flourished more than a hundred years ago, but his writings are as vivid and modern as the day on which they were written. His prose is not only alive today, it is much more lively than most of the prose of today. It is the outpouring of a great mind and spirit upon paper. His method is conversational: he does not, like an orator, address an audience, but like a true essayist he speaks to the reader as if there were no one else there. His prose imparts energy to the reader: in that way there is none quite like it. 'Though we are mighty fine fellows nowadays,' said Stevenson, 'we cannot write like Hazlitt'.

THE day was fine for a December morning. The grass was wet, and the ground miry, and ploughed up with multitudinous feet, except that, within the ring itself, there was a spot of virgin-green, closed in and unprofaned by vulgar tread, that shone with dazzling brightness in the mid-day sun. For it was now noon, and we had an hour to wait. This is the trying time. It is then the heart sickens, as you think what the two

champions are about, and how short a time will determine their fate. After the first blow is struck there is no opportunity for nervous apprehensions; you are swallowed up in the immediate interest of the scene—but

Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream

I found it so as I felt the sun's rays clinging to my back, and saw the white wintry clouds sink below the verge of the horizon. 'So,' I thought, 'my fairest hopes have faded from my sight!—so will the Gas-man's glory, or that of his adversary, vanish in an hour.' The *swells* were parading in their white box-coats; the outer ring was cleared, with some bruises on the heads and shins of the rustic assembly (for the *cockneys* had been distanced by the sixty-six miles), the time drew near; I had got a good stand; a bustle, a buzz, ran through the crowd; and from the opposite side entered Neate, between his second and bottle-holder. He rolled along, swathed in his loose great-coat, his knock-knees bending under his huge bulk; and, with a modest, cheerful air, threw his hat into the ring. He then just looked round, and began quietly to undress; when from the other side there was a similar rush and an opening made, and the Gas-man came forward with a conscious air of anticipated triumph, too much like the cock-of-the-walk. He

strutted about more than became a hero, sucked oranges with a supercilious air, and threw away the skin with a toss of his head, and went up and looked at Neate, which was an act of supererogation. The only sensible thing he did was, as he strode away from the modern Ajax, to fling out his arms, as if he wanted to try whether they would do their work that day. By this time they had stripped, and presented a strong contrast in appearance. If Neate was like Ajax, 'with Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear' the pugilistic reputation of all Bristol, Hickman might be compared to Diomed, light, vigorous, elastic, and his back glistened in the sun, as he moved about, like a panther's hide. There was now a dead pause,—attention was awe-struck. Who at that moment, big with a great event, did not draw his breath short—did not feel his heart throb? All was ready. They tossed up for the sun, and the Gas-man won. They were led up to the *scratch*—shook hands, and went at it.

In the first round everyone thought it was all over. After making play a short time, the Gas-man flew at his adversary like a tiger, struck five blows in as many seconds, three first, and then, following him as he staggered back, two more, right and left, and down he fell, a mighty run. There was a shout, and I said: 'There is no standing this.' Neate seemed like a lifeless lump of flesh and bone, round which the Gas-man's blows played with the rapidity of electricity or lightning, and you imagined he would only be lifted

up to be knocked down again. It was as if Hickman held a sword or a fire in that right hand of his, and directed it against an unarmed body. They met again, and Neate seemed, not cowed, but particularly cautious. I saw his teeth clenched together and his brows knit close against the sun. He held out both his arms at full length, straight before him, like two sledge-hammers, and raised his left an inch or two higher. The Gas-man could not get over this guard—they struck mutually and fell, but without advantage on either side. It was the same in the next round; but the balance of power was thus restored—the fate of the battle was suspended. No one could tell how it would end. This was the only moment in which opinion was divided; for, in the next, the Gas-man aiming a mortal blow at his adversary's neck, with his right hand, and failing from the length he had to reach, the other returned it with his left at full swing, planted a tremendous blow on his cheek-bone and eyebrow, and made a red ruin of that side of his face. The Gas-man went down, and there was another shout—a roar of triumph as the waves of fortune rolled tumultuously from side to side. This was a settler. Hickman got up, and ‘grinned horrible a ghastly smile’, yet he was evidently dashed in his opinion of himself; it was the first time he had ever been so punished; all one side of his face was perfect scarlet, and his right eye was closed in dingy blackness, as he advanced to the fight, less confident, but still determined. After

one or two rounds, not receiving another such remembrancer, he rallied and went at it with his former impetuosity. But in vain. His strength had been weakened—his blows could not tell at such a distance—he was obliged to fling himself at his adversary, and could not strike from his feet; and almost as regularly as he flew at him with his right hand, Neate warded the blow, or drew back out of its reach, and felled him with the return of his left. There was little cautious sparring—no half-hits—no tapping and trifling, none of the *petit-maîreship* of the art—they were almost all knock-down blows:—the fight was a good stand-up fight. The wonder was the half-minute time. If there had been a minute or more allowed between each round, it would have been intelligible how they should by degrees recover strength and resolution; but to see two men smashed to the ground, smeared with gore, stunned, senseless, the breath beaten out of their bodies; and then, before you recover from the shock, to see them rise up with new strength and courage, stand ready to inflict or receive mortal offence, and rush upon each other ‘like two clouds over the Caspian’—this is the most astonishing thing of all—this is the high and heroic state of man! From this time forward the event became more certain every round; and about the twelfth it seemed as if it must have been over. Hickman generally stood with his back to me; but in the scuffle he had changed positions, and Neate just then

made a tremendous lunge at him, and hit him full in the face. It was doubtful whether he would fall backwards or forwards; he hung suspended for a minute or two, and then fell back, throwing his hands in the air, and with his face lifted up to the sky. I never saw anything more terrific than his aspect just before he fell. All traces of life, of natural expression, were gone from him. His face was like a human skull, a death's head spouting blood. The eyes were filled with blood, the nose streamed with blood, the mouth gaped blood. He was not like an actual man, but like a preternatural, spectral appearance, or like one of the figures in Dante's *Inferno*. Yet he fought on after this for several rounds, still striking the first desperate blow, and Neate standing on the defensive, and using the same cautious guard to the last, as if he had still all his work to do; and it was not till the Gas-man was so stunned, in the seventeenth or eighteenth round, that his senses forsook him, and he could not come to time, that the battle was declared over. Ye who despise the *Fancy*, do something to show as much *pluck*, or as much self-possession as this, before you assume a superiority which you have never given a single proof of by any one action in the whole course of your lives! —When the Gas-man came to himself, the first words he uttered were: 'Where am I? What is the matter?' 'Nothing is the matter, Tom,—you have lost the battle, but you are the bravest man alive.' And Jackson whispered to him. 'I am collecting a nurse for

you, Tom.'—Vain sounds, and unheard at that moment! Neate instantly went up and shook him cordially by the hand, and, seeing some old acquaintance, began to flourish with his fists, calling out . ' Ah ! you always said I couldn't fight—What do you think now ? ' But all in good humour, and without any appearance of arrogance ; only it was evident Bill Neate was pleased that he had won the fight. When it was over, I asked Cribb if he did not think it was a good one ? He said : '*Pretty well !*' The carrier pigeons now mounted into the air, and one of them flew with the news of her husband's victory to the bosom of Mrs Neate. Alas for Mrs Hickman !

XVII. WALKING TOURS

BY R. L. STEVENSON

From *Virgibus Puerisque*

THE prose of Stevenson brings us the atmosphere of a delightful world which has passed away. It was a good world and a world of leisure. There was no urgency about saying anything, and a writer could spend almost infinite time on the way he said things. Stevenson often rewrote twelve times to acquire the sparkle of spontaneous statement. In writing of this kind the emphasis passes from the subject to the mind and spirit of the writer as reflected in his way of saying things. This is the special pleasure of the literary essay and you can test yourself as a reader not merely of English but of English literature by seeing whether you really enjoy this brilliant essay.

It must not be imagined that a walking tour, as some would have us fancy, is merely a better or worse way of seeing the country. There are many ways of seeing landscape quite as good; and none more vivid, in spite of canting dilettantes, than from a railway train. But landscape on a walking tour is quite accessory. He who is indeed of the brotherhood does not voyage in quest of the picturesque, but of certain jolly humours—of the hope and spirit with which the march begins at morning, and the peace and spiritual exaltation

the evening's rest. He cannot tell whether he puts his knapsack on, or takes it off, with more delight. The excitement of the departure puts him in key for that of the arrival. Whatever he does is not only a reward in itself, but will be further rewarded in the sequel; and so pleasure leads on to pleasure in an endless chain. It is this that so few can understand; they will either be always lounging or always at five miles an hour; they do not play off the one against the other, prepare all day for the evening, and all evening for the next day. And, above all, it is here that your overwalker fails of comprehension. His heart rises against those who drink their curacoa in liqueur glasses, when he himself can swill it in a brown John. He will not believe that the flavour is more delicate in the smaller dose. He will not believe that to walk this uncor-scionable distance is merely to stupefy and brutalize himself, and come to his inn, at night, with a sort of frost on his five wits, and a starless night of darkness in his spirit. Not for him the mild luminous evening of the temperate walker! He has nothing left of man but a physical need for bedtime and a double night-cap; and even his pipe, if he be a smoker, will be savourless and disenchanted. It is the fate of such an one to take twice as much trouble as is needed to obtain happiness, and miss the happiness in the end; he is the man of the proverb, in short, who goes further and fares worse.

Now, to be properly enjoyed, a walking tour should

be gone upon alone. If you go in a company, or even in pairs, it is no longer a walking tour in anything but name; it is something else and more in the nature of a picnic. A walking tour should be gone upon alone, because freedom is of the essence; because you should be able to stop and go on, and follow this way or that, as the freak takes you; and because you must have your own pace, and neither trot alongside a champion walker, nor mince in time with a girl. And then you must be open to all impressions and let your thoughts take colour from what you see. You should be as a pipe for any wind to play upon. 'I cannot see the wit', says Hazlitt, 'of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I wish to vegetate like the country,'—which is the gist of all that can be said upon the matter. There should be no cackle of voices at your elbow, to jar on the meditative silence of the morning. And so long as a man is reasoning he cannot surrender himself to that fine intoxication that comes of much motion in the open air, that begins in a sort of dazzle and sluggishness of the brain, and ends in a peace that passes comprehension.

During the first day or so of any tour there are moments of bitterness, when the traveller feels more than coldly towards his knapsack, when he is half in a mind to throw it bodily over the hedge and, like Christian on a similar occasion, 'give three leaps and go on singing'. And yet it soon acquires a property

of easiness. It becomes magnetic; the spirit of the journey enters into it. And no sooner have you passed the straps over your shoulder than the lees of sleep are cleared from you, you pull yourself together with a shake, and fall at once into your stride. And surely, of all possible moods, this, in which a man takes the road, is the best. Of course, if he *will* keep thinking of his anxieties, if he *will* open the merchant Abudah's chest and walk arm-in-arm with the hag—why, wherever he is, and whether he walk fast or slow, the chances are that he will not be happy. And so much the more shame to himself! There are perhaps thirty men setting forth at that same hour, and I would lay a large wager there is not another dull face among the thirty. It would be a fine thing to follow, in a coat of darkness, one after another of these wayfarers, some summer morning, for the first few miles upon the road. This one, who walks fast, with a keen look in his eyes, is all concentrated in his own mind; he is up at his loom, weaving and weaving, to set the landscape to words. This one peers about, as he goes, among the grasses; he waits by the canal to watch the dragonflies; he leans on the gate of the pasture, and cannot look enough upon the complacent kine. And here comes another, talking, laughing, and gesticulating to himself. His face changes from time to time, as indignation flashes from his eyes or anger clouds his forehead. He is composing articles, delivering orations, and conducting the most impassioned interviews,

by the way. A little farther on, and it is as like as not he will begin to sing. And well for him, supposing him to be no great master in that art, if he stumble across no stolid peasant at a corner, for on such an occasion, I scarcely know which is the more troubled, or whether it is worse to suffer the confusion of your troubadour, or the unfeigned alarm of your clown. A sedentary population, accustomed, besides, to the strange mechanical bearing of the common tramp, can in no wise explain to itself the gaiety of these passers-by. I knew one man who was arrested as a runaway lunatic, because although a full-grown person with a red beard, he skipped as he went like a child. And you would be astonished if I were to tell you all the grave and learned heads who have confessed to me that, when on walking tours, they sang—and sang very ill—and had a pair of red ears when, as described above, the inauspicious peasant plumped into their arms from round a corner. And here, lest you should think I am exaggerating, is Hazlitt's own confession, from his essay *On Going a Journey*, which is so good that there should be a tax levied on all who have not read it.

‘Give me the clear blue sky over my head,’ says he, ‘and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours’ march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy.’

Bravo! After that adventure of my friend with the

policeman, you would not have cared, would you, to publish that in the first person? But we have no bravery nowadays, and, even in books, must all pretend to be as dull and foolish as our neighbours. It was not so with Hazlitt. And notice how learned he is (as, indeed, throughout the essay) in the theory of walking tours. He is none of your athletic men in purple stockings, who walk their fifty miles a day: three hours' march is his ideal. And then he must have a winding road, the epicure!

Yet there is one thing I object to in these words of his, one thing in the great master's practice that seems to me not wholly wise. I do not approve of that leaping and running. Both of these hurry the respiration; they both shake up the brain out of its glorious open-air confusion; and they both break the pace. Uneven walking is not so agreeable to the body, and it distracts and irritates the mind. Whereas, when once you have fallen into an equable stride, it requires no conscious thought from you to keep it up, and yet it prevents you from thinking earnestly of anything else. Like knitting, like the work of a copying clerk, it gradually neutralizes and sets to sleep the serious activity of the mind. We can think of this or that, lightly and laughingly, as a child thinks, or as we think in a morning doze; we can make puns or puzzle out acrostics, and trifle in a thousand ways with words and rhymes, but when it comes to honest work, when we come to gather ourselves together for an effort, we

may sound the trumpet as loud and long as we please; the great barons of the mind will not rally to the standard, but sit, each one, at home, warming his hands over his own fire and brooding on his own private thought !

In the course of a day's walk, you see, there is much variance in the mood. From the exhilaration of the start, to the happy phlegm of the arrival, the change is certainly great. As the day goes on, the traveller moves from the one extreme towards the other. He becomes more and more incorporated with the material landscape, and the open-air drunkenness grows upon him with great strides, until he posts along the road, and sees everything about him, as in a cheerful dream. The first is certainly brighter, but the second stage is the more peaceful. A man does not make so many articles towards the end, nor does he laugh aloud; but the purely animal pleasures, the sense of physical well-being, the delight of every inhalation, of every time the muscles tighten down the thigh, console him for the absence of the others, and bring him to his destination still content.

Nor must I forget to say a word on bivouacs. You come to a milestone on a hill, or some place where deep ways meet under trees, and off goes the knapsack, and down you sit to smoke a pipe in the shade. You sink into yourself, and the birds come round and look at you; and your smoke dissipates upon the afternoon under the blue dome of heaven; and the sun lies warm

upon your feet, and the cool air visits your neck and turns aside your open shirt. If you are not happy, you must have an evil conscience. You may dally as long as you like by the roadside. It is almost as if the millennium were arrived, when we shall throw our clocks and watches over the house-top, and remember time and seasons no more. Not to keep hours for a lifetime is, I was going to say, to live for ever. You have no idea, unless you have tried it, how endlessly long is a summer's day, that you measure out only by hunger, and bring to an end only when you are drowsy. I know a village where there are hardly any clocks, where no one knows more of the days of the week than by a sort of instinct for the fête on Sundays, and where only one person can tell you the day of the month, and she is generally wrong; and if people were aware how slow Time journeyed in that village, and what armfuls of spare hours he gives, over and above the bargain, to its wise inhabitants, I believe there would be a stampede out of London, Liverpool, Paris, and a variety of large towns, where the clocks lose their heads, and shake the hours out each one faster than the other, as though they were all in a wager. And all these foolish pilgrims would each bring his own misery along with him, in a watch-pocket! It is to be noticed, there were no clocks and watches in the much-vaunted days before the flood. It follows, of course, there were no appointments, and punctuality was not yet thought upon. 'Though ye take from a covetous man all his

treasure,' says Milton, ' he has yet one jewel left ; ye cannot deprive him of his covetousness.' And so I would say of a modern man of business, you may do what you will for him, put him in Eden, give him the elixir of life—he has still a flaw at heart, he still has his business habits. Now, there is no time when business habits are more mitigated than on a walking tour. And so during these halts, as I say, you will feel almost free.

But it is at night, and after dinner, that the best hour comes. There are no such pipes to be smoked as those that follow a good day's march, the flavour of the tobacco is a thing to be remembered, it is so dry and aromatic, so full and so fine. If you wind up the evening with grog, you will own there was never such grog, at every sip a jocund tranquillity spreads about your limbs, and sits easily in your heart. If you read a book—and you will never do so save by fits and starts—you find the language strangely racy and harmonious; words take a new meaning, single sentences possess the ear for half-an-hour together, and the writer endears himself to you, at every page, by the nicest coincidence of sentiment. It seems as if it were a book you had written yourself in a dream. To all we have read on such occasions we look back with special favour. ' It was on the 10th of April, 1798,' says Hazlitt, with amorous precision, ' that I sat down to a volume of the new *Héloise*, at the Inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken.'

I should wish to quote more, for though we are mighty fine fellows nowadays, we cannot write like Hazlitt. And, talking of that, a volume of 'Hazlitt's essays would be a capital pocket-book on such a journey; so would a volume of Heine's songs; and for *Tristram Shandy* I can pledge a fair experience.

If the evening be fine and warm, there is nothing better in life than to lounge before the inn door in the sunset, or lean over the parapet of the bridge, to watch the weeds and the quick fishes. It is then, if ever, that you taste Jovialty to the full significance of that audacious word. Your muscles are so agreeably slack, you feel so clean and so strong and so idle, that whether you move or sit still, whatever you do is done with pride and a kingly sort of pleasure. You fall in talk with any one, wise or foolish, drunk or sober. And it seems as if a hot walk purged you, more than of anything else, of all narrowness and pride, and left curiosity to play its part freely, as in a child or a man of science. You lay aside all your own hobbies, to watch provincial humours develop themselves before you, now as a laughable farce, and now grave and beautiful like an old tale.

Or perhaps you are left to your own company for the night, and surly weather imprisons you by the fire. You may remember how Burns, numbering past pleasures, dwells upon the hours when he has been 'happy thinking'. It is a phrase that may well perplex a poor modern, girt about on every side by

clocks and chimes, and haunted, even at night, by flaming dial-plates. For we are all so busy, and have so many far-off projects to realize, and castles in the fire to turn into solid habitable mansions on a gravel soil, that we can find no time for pleasure trips into the Land of Thought and among the Hills of Vanity. Changed times, indeed, when we must sit all night, beside the fire, with folded hands; and a changed world for most of us, when we find we can pass the hours without discontent, and be happy thinking. We are in such haste to be doing, to be writing, to be gathering gear, to make our voice audible a moment in the derisive silence of eternity, that we forget that one thing, of which these are but the parts—namely, to live. We fall in love, we drink hard, we run to and fro upon the earth like frightened sheep. And now you are to ask yourself if, when all is done, you would not have been better to sit by the fire at home and be happy thinking. To sit still and contemplate,—to remember the faces of women without desire, to be pleased by the great deeds of men without envy, to be everything and everywhere in sympathy, and yet content to remain where and what you are—is not this to know both wisdom and virtue, and to dwell with happiness? After all, it is not they who carry flags, but they who look upon it from a private chamber, who have the fun of the procession. And once you are at that, you are in the very humour of all social heresy. It is no time for shuffling, or for big, empty words

If you ask yourself what you mean by fame, riches, or learning, the answer is far to seek; and you go back into that kingdom of light imaginations, which seem so vain in the eyes of Philistines perspiring after wealth, and so momentous to those who are stricken with the disproportions of the world, and, in the face of the gigantic stars, cannot stop to split differences between two degrees of the infinitesimally small, such as a tobacco-pipe or the Roman Empire, a million of money or a fiddle-stick's end.

You lean from the window, your last pipe reeking whitely into the darkness, your body full of delicious pains, your mind enthroned in the seventh circle of content, when suddenly the moon changes, the weather-cock goes about, and you ask yourself one question more: whether, for the interval, you have been the wisest philosopher or the most egregious of donkeys? Human experience is not yet able to reply, but at least you have had a fine moment, and looked down upon all the kingdoms of the earth. And whether it was wise or foolish, tomorrow's travel will carry you, body and mind into some different parish of the infinite

XVIII THE RICH AND THE POOR

BY W. H. HUDSON

From A Traveller in Little Things

W. H. HUDSON was one of the great artists of the last generation in prose description. He wrote mainly about his early life in South America and his later years in England, and this passage is a fine example of his descriptive powers. The woman is described at her pathetic task of getting food from the weeds of the seashore. For contrast, the carelessly happy, noisy group of golfers breaks upon her silent work. Out of that naturally comes the story of how they were both there. Comment is too obvious to be necessary and would break the gentle atmosphere of the description. Yet he is not content merely to describe, for that would be to omit the essence of it to an artist, which is 'to endeavour to convey the emotion evoked by what he has witnessed.'

At sunset, when the strong wind from the sea was beginning to feel cold, I stood on the top of the sand-hill looking down at an old woman hurrying about over the low damp ground beneath—a bit of sea-flat divided from the sea by the ridge of sand; and I wondered at her, because her figure was that of a feeble old woman, yet she moved—I had almost said flitted—over that damp level ground in a surprisingly swift light manner.

pausing at intervals to stoop and gather something from the surface. But I couldn't see her distinctly enough to satisfy myself: the sun was sinking below the horizon, and that dimness in the air and coldness in the wind at day's decline, when the year too was declining, made all objects look dim. Going down to her I found that she was old, with thin grey hair on an uncovered head, a lean dark face with regular features and grey eyes that were not old and looked steadily at mine, affecting me with a sudden mysterious sadness. For they were unsmiling eyes and themselves expressed an unutterable sadness, as it appeared to me at the first swift glance; or perhaps not that, as it presently seemed, but a shadowy something which sadness had left in them, when all pleasure and all interest in life forsook her, with all affections, and she no longer cherished either memories or hopes. This may be nothing but conjecture or fancy, but if she had been a visitor from another world she could not have seemed more strange to me.

I asked her what she was doing there so late in the day, and she answered in a quiet even voice which had a shadow in it too, that she was gathering samphire of that kind which grows on the flat saltings and has a dull green leek-like fleshy leaf. At this season, she informed me, it was fit for gathering to pickle and put by for use during the year. She carried a pail to put it in, and a table-knife in her hand to dig the plants up by the roots, and she also had an old sack in which she

put every dry stick and chip of wood she came across. She added that she had gathered samphire at this same spot every August end for very many years.

I prolonged the conversation, questioning her and listening with affected interest to her mechanical answers, while trying to fathom those unsmiling, unearthly eyes that looked so steadily at mine.

And presently, as we talked, a babble of human voices reached our ears, and half turning we saw the crowd, or rather procession, of golfers coming from the golf-house by the links where they had been drinking tea. Ladies and gentlemen players, forty or more of them, following in a loose line, in couples and small groups, on their way to the Golfers' Hotel, a little further up the coast; a remarkably good-looking lot with well-fed happy faces, well dressed and in a merry mood, all freely talking and laughing. Some were staying at the hotel, and for the others a score or so of motor-cars were standing before its gates to take them inland to their homes, or to houses where they were staying.

We suspended the conversation while they were passing us, within three yards of where we stood, and as they passed the story of the links where they had been amusing themselves since luncheon-time came into my mind. The land there was owned by an old, an ancient, family, they had occupied it, so it is said, since the Conquest; but the head of the house was now poor, having no house property in London, no coal mines in

Wales, no income from any other source than the land, the twenty or thirty thousand acres let for farming. Even so he would not have been poor, strictly speaking, but for the sons, who preferred a life of pleasure in town, where they probably had private establishments of their own. At all events they kept race-horses, and had their cars, and lived in the best clubs, and year by year the patient old father was called upon to discharge their debts of honour. It was a painful position for so estimable a man to be placed in, and he was much pitied by his friends and neighbours, who regarded him as a worthy representative of the best and oldest family in the county. But he was compelled to do what he could to make both ends meet, and one of the little things he did was to establish golf-links over a mile or so of sand-hills, lying between the ancient coast village and the sea, and to build and run a Golfers' Hotel in order to attract visitors from all parts. In this way, incidentally, the villagers were cut off from their old direct way to the sea and deprived of those barren dunes, which were their open space and recreation ground and had stood them in the place of a common for long centuries. They were warned off and told that they must use a path to the beach which took them over half a mile from the village. And they had been very humble and obedient and had made no complaint. Indeed, the agent had assured them that they had every reason to be grateful to the overlord, since in return for that trivial inconvenience they had been

put to they would have the golfers there, and there would be employment for some of the village boys as caddies. Nevertheless, I had discovered that they were not grateful but considered that an injustice had been done to them, and it rankled in their hearts.

I remembered all this while the golfers were streaming by, and wondered if this poor woman did not, like her fellow-villagers, cherish a secret bitterness against those who had deprived them of the use of the dunes where for generations they had been accustomed to walk or sit or lie on the loose yellow sands among the barren grasses, and had also cut off their direct way to the sea where they went daily in search of bits of firewood and whatever else the waves threw up which would be a help to them in their poor lives.

If it be so, I thought, some change will surely come into those unchanging eyes at the sight of all these merry, happy golfers on their way to their hotel and their cars and luxurious homes.

But though I watched her face closely there was no change, no faintest trace of ill-feeling or feeling of any kind: only that same shadow which had been there was there still, and her fixed eyes were like those of a captive bird or animal, that gaze at us, yet seem not to see us but to look through and beyond us. And it was the same when they had all gone by and we finished our talk and I put money in her hand; she thanked me without a smile, in the same quiet even

tone of voice in which she had replied to my question about the samphire.

I went up once more to the top of the ridge, and looking down saw her again as I had seen her at first, only dimmer, swiftly, lightly moving or flitting moth-like or ghost-like over the low flat salting, still gathering samphire in the cold wind, and the thought that came to me was that I was looking at and had been interviewing a being that was very like a ghost, or in any case a soul, a something which could not be described, like certain atmospheric effects in earth and water and sky which are ignored by the 'landscape painter. To protect himself he cultivates what is called the 'sloth of the eye—he thrusts his fingers into his ears, so to speak, not to hear that mocking voice that follows and mocks him with his miserable limitations. He who seeks to convey his impressions with a pen is almost as badly off: the most he can do in such instances as the one related, is to endeavour to convey the emotion evoked by what he has witnessed.

Let me then take the case of the man who has trained his eyes, or rather whose vision has unconsciously trained itself, to look at every face he meets, to find in most cases something, however little, of the person's inner life. Such a man could hardly walk the length of the Strand and Fleet Street or of Oxford Street without being startled at the sight of a face which haunts him with its tragedy, its mystery, the strange things it has half revealed. But it does not haunt him long; another

arresting face follows, and then another, and the impressions all fade and vanish from the memory in a little while. But from time to time, at long intervals, once perhaps in a lustrum, he will encounter a face that will not cease to haunt him, whose vivid impression will not fade for years. It was a face and eyes of that kind which I met in the samphire gatherer on that cold evening; but the mystery of it is a mystery still.

EXERCISES

I. ENGLISH IN THIS MODERN WORLD

1. Referring to your atlas, make a list of English-speaking areas, going east from Calcutta and back again, naming the areas from north to south.
2. What are the rates for book postage in India ?
3. How would you make a bibliographical reference of this textbook ?
4. Write a short broadcast speech describing the contents and uses of an Indian Encyclopædia.
5. Make a list of the uses of Wireless to the villager.

II A MODERN PARLIAMENT AT WORK

1. Define the following expressions —Maiden Speech, Standing Orders, Whips, Royal Commission, Speaker, the Address, Questions, Rules of Procedure
2. How did the Prime Minister's motion affect Private Members' Bills ?
3. Who are Lord Baldwin, Mr Attlee, Mr Maxton, Mr Churchill, Sir Archibald Sinclair ?
4. During what debate do Members have the greatest freedom of speech ?
5. Make a list of the arguments for and against making a Maiden Speech on that occasion

III. MODERN INDIA

1. Make a list of the experiments on plants described in this passage
2. What is the effect of chloroform, caffeine and sun on plants?
3. How did chloroform help when transplanting the tree?
4. What has the writer to say about education?
5. Write a paragraph describing your feelings on first seeing the monsoon clouds.

IV. LEARNING TO FLY

1. Name and explain the parts of the aeroplane mentioned in the passage.
2. What was his reaction to Marshall's remark about paying for the machine, and what caused his feeling?
3. What trick did Marshall play to teach the other learner to fly solo?
4. What should the wind direction be for taking off and landing?
5. Give a very brief account of what you have observed of this learner's character.

V. HAPPINESS IN THIS MODERN WORLD

1. What do you consider the most valuable Chinese teaching mentioned in this essay?
2. What is the Western difficulty about precept and practice? Does such a difficulty exist at all in India?

3 What does the essayist say about travel and the Time Machine?

4. Make a list of the criticisms the writer makes of his own society.

5. In what ways has China changed since this essay was written?

VI. ABOUT READING

1. What does the writer tell us about Lamb?

2. What does the writer say Lamb tells us about himself in *Dream Children*?

3. What does he say in the first paragraph about making books human?

4. Appreciate briefly Bennett's criticism of the invention of the children

5. Make a list of the reasons Bennett offers for calling *Dream Children* a classic.

VII. ABOUT WRITING

1. What are the three ways of saying things?

2. What is the special value of understatement?

3. Under what circumstances is it useful to state things 'twice as big as they are'?

4. Give the three best examples of 'absolutely literal statement' from the texts you have so far read in this book

5. Explain the power of the examples from Shaw, American slang and Jowett.

VIII. ABOUT BACTERIA

1. Make lists of the dangers from and the merits of bacteria

2. If you were trying to explain vaccination and inoculation to a villager, what hints would you get from this paragraph? List them

3. How can bacteria be killed? What happens to them in cold?

4. How does 'spontaneous combustion' occur?

5. What can you tell a villager of 'soil content' from this passage?

6. State in a word or brief phrase the subject-matter of each paragraph in this passage

IX. ABOUT BIRDS

1. Name ten birds you see commonly in the cold weather, and ten that are familiar during the hot weather.

2. Describe the plumage of the bird that seems to you more beautiful than any of the others.

3. Make a list of the ways in which birds are useful.

4. What is meant by Bird Protection? What laws are there on it in your province?

5. Prepare a wireless talk four minutes long on Bird Watching.

X. ABOUT ANIMALS

1. What is the purpose of these intelligence tests?

2. 'They have not so much learnt a lesson as formed a habit' Describe clearly what this means. Give an example.

3. Define. 'stamped in', infusion, movement-

habit, habit-formation, mirror-image; motor habits; trial-and-error method

4. What are the two ways of attacking these problems? Which way does the animal use?

5. Describe the setting-up of the wire for the last problem as neatly as you can.

XI. ULTIMA THULE

1. What was the effect of the old man on the people with whom he came in contact?

2. Discuss how the characters of the landlady and the theatrical manager are built.

3. Make a list of the kindly acts of the old man.

4. Write a description as clear and brief as you can of the outward appearance of the old man.

5. What happened to his pets after his death?

XII. MR STRENBERRY'S TALE

1. A character sketch of Mr Strenberry. this will show that superficially it is unlikely he should have such a vision, that actually it is quite likely, and how natural the results of the vision are on his character.

2. Describe the vision

3. The place where the story is told and the story of the vision are in strong contrast. Make parallel lists of contrasting items, e.g. wet day; sunny day.

4. What was the local opinion of Mr Strenberry?

5. What sort of person is the teller of the tale? (Do not invent things, let your answer be accurate, however short.)

XIII MR ODDY

- 1 Write brief descriptions of Tommy Brown and Mr Oddy.
2. Tell the love story as briefly as you can
3. Make a list of the places which form the background of the story.
- 4 Why did the famous novelist pretend to be the unknown Mr Oddy?
5. Make a list of the sarcastic and ironical remarks in the story.

XIV. ADVICE TO VILLAGERS

1. Prepare a short discussion of the argument stated in paragraph four
2. 'It is necessary to the very existence of a people, that nine out of ten should live wholly by the sweat of their brow.' Note briefly how far this statement would have to be modified in an industrial country today.
3. What has Cobbett to say about large families?
4. How does Cobbett define Economy and Education? Prepare simple talks to be given to villagers on these two words

XV. DREAM CHILDREN

- 1 Make a list of the things we learn about Charles Lamb in this essay.

2 What information about his family is given us ?

3. A short appreciative essay on the creation of the dream children.

4 How many paragraphs are there in this essay ? What are the ordinary rules on paragraphing ? Can you suggest why Lamb ignores them here ?

XVI. THE FIGHT

1 Name the English poets quoted in this passage.

2 When did the fight turn in Bill Neate's favour, and how did it happen ?

3 What have you learned about the rules and customs of boxing in those days ?

4 An essay on Boxing—defending or attacking it according to your own views

XVII. WALKING TOURS

1 Make a list of reasons for going on a walking tour alone.

2 Describe in detail how Stevenson differs from Hazlitt in his views

3. 'In the course of a day's walk, you see, there is much variance in the mood' State briefly the points Stevenson makes in developing this theme

4. What criticism does Stevenson offer of modern life around him ?

5. What special arguments against walking tours in your own district are there ?

XVIII THE RICH AND THE POOR

1. What criticism of society is behind this passage?

2. A good writer never wastes an adjective. Show the force of the adjectives in the first paragraph one by one.

3. Why did the landlord become poor? How did the peasants suffer in consequence?

4. Describe the distinction Hudson makes between the painter and the writer in describing scenery.

NOTES

I ENGLISH IN THIS MODERN WORLD

Page 3. 1 *Empire Broadcasting Service* a short wave service of 24 hours so arranged that all parts of the Empire can receive important news at appropriate times For example, 5½ hours difference is allowed for Indian broadcasts, so that the News Bulletin at 7 p.m. is read in London at 1-30 p.m. Important speeches are recorded on gramophone records and relayed at appropriate times

Page 4. 20 *uncontrolled*: only very famous men may insist on this Usually all speeches are typed and censored beforehand by the B B C authorities

24 *the larger part* in the United States

27 *reality* a reference to the 'uncontrolled' truth of his speech propaganda implies stating a case—selecting the truth

Page 5. 3 *President* then Mr Roosevelt

3 *Mr Henry Ford* the maker of motor cars prominent industrialist

5 *idiom of thought* mental outlook.

21 *cosmopolis* world city The fine Greek word 'cosmopolitan' means a citizen of the world in the sense of one who uses 'the same idiom of thought' as the best men in all countries

26 *Latin-speaking* the Roman Empire and the unity of the Jews

Page 6. 5 *Now a thing* he is speaking now of the results of our developed communications

28 *Babel* the Bible story of the insolent people who set out to build a tower to heaven and were confounded by being suddenly made to speak different languages—a neat story to explain to simple minds the presence of many languages on the earth

Page 8 4 *Tantalus*. suffered from extreme thirst in Hades, standing in water and with a luscious bunch of grapes above him. They always receded from his reach as he bent or stretched to get at them A Greek fable

II A MODERN PARLIAMENT AT WORK

Page 12. 3 *Chamberlain* statesman, elder brother of the Prime Minister, Mr Neville Chamberlain

5 *Grillion's Club* a political club in London

6 *Café Royal* a great meeting place in London, especially of artistic people

6 *apparition* appearance, here has the quality of 'unexpected appearance' of a statesman in an artists' meeting place

7 *Bohemians* includes all kinds of artistic people who flout social customs.

9 '*late*' an extended licence for the sale of alcohol

10 *undergraduates* the meeting took place at Oxford

12 *Maiden Speech* an important question, for the House of Commons is the most difficult and critical debating society in the world

Page 13. 2 '*get it over*' the natural tendency is to get a thing over to be rid of worry

5 *absorb the atmosphere* get the spirit and mood of the House

7 *procedure* rules of debates

9 *Old Hands* experienced men

12 *field is placed*: metaphor from cricket

15. *Westminster* the Houses of Parliament

Page 14. 2 *Government* the Cabinet, advised by the Civil Service

8 *bursting with legislation* the style of this passage is colloquial in a refreshing, vivid way

9 *private Members* not attached to one of the great Parties

14 *Report of a Royal Commission* when some subject urgently requires attention the King appoints a Commission

to investigate it On this question of divorce Herbert had an invaluable report from such a Commission to assist him

16 *few Fridays* the day allotted to Private Members They draw lots for the right of presenting their Bills

29 *administration* the carrying out of the law as distinct from law making

Page 15 3 *Bobby* the imaginary little boy to whom so much of Mr Herbert's work is addressed

4 *King's Proctor* a law officer whose duty is to see that the Divorce Laws are enforced

5 *B B C* The British Broadcasting Corporation

5-6 *he cannot say* because that would involve legislation while the other suggestions do not.

15 *Gracious Speech* His Majesty addresses Parliament when it opens, and his speech reflects the policy of the party in power

18-19 *gracious but* i.e., because the speaker criticizes the speech He recognizes that His Majesty is gracious to make the speech, but what his Government has given him to say is contemptible

21-2 *institution of polygamy* the writer is merely suggesting three wildly unlikely ideas which under the rules could be suggested

Page 16. 2 *Licensing* the hours during which premises licensed to sell alcohol are open The writer wishes them extended

2 *Betting* is not taxed in England, and the revenue from that tax would be enormous

6-7 '*win a Turkey*' at Christmas time there are frequent ballots in villages for Christmas food, the first prize often being that favourite dish, a turkey Here means simply 'I should never win'

8-9 *Ten-minute Rule* under which a member can have his subject debated for ten minutes at the end of the day

18 *startling victory* the writer's election to the House surprised himself and most other people

21 *some expectation* the writer went to the House with a great reputation as a humorist, playwright and novelist

23 *the first day* December 3, 1935

29 *General Election* the implication is that so soon after an Election members will not have private Bills ready

Page 17. 4 *caused conversations* the Whips of my party have discussed with the Whips of the others

6 *Opposition* the Labour Party

20. *little red light*. a spot of anger

21 *Hammersmith* where the writer lives in London

21. *Hampden*. one of the great Parliamentary defenders in the time of Charles I

Page 18 2. *written to the Speaker*. in order to catch the Speaker's eye, he wrote beforehand of his intention to speak

16 *free-lance*: independent, usually used of journalists not attached to a paper.

Page 19. 4 *my special 'department'*. as an Independent Member the defence of independence in these matters was his peculiar care

21. *Hansard* official record of the speeches in the Houses of Parliament. Originally compiled by a firm of that name from 1774

23-4 *Matrimonial Causes Bill* brought before the House in 1933 and never passed into law

Page 20. 1. *Punch* the famous English comic paper A national institution to which the writer has contributed since he was twenty.

6. *Temple*. a most lovely relic of old London where lawyers live Between the Strand and the Thames

Page 21. 1 *Mawton* one of the greatest orators in the House Holds unpopular views and his followers in this House numbered three

11 *Bar* messengers and others may come as far as the Bar, only Members may pass it.

Page 23 15. *barking* the metaphor means 'to make a fuss about nothing'.

Page 25. 1 *drop his notes*. he mentions common accidents in maiden speeches.

8-9 *one long demand*. a new member should be modest and

not pretend to speak valuably, and it does not seem very modest to attack the Prime Minister

15 *Mr. Churchill* one of the greatest orators and personalities in the House in this generation

Page 26. 15 *Disraeli* great Victorian statesman and orator Opponent of Gladstone and for long alternated with him as Prime Minister.

Page 27. 12 *Front Bench* : where the senior members sit.

III MODERN INDIA

Page 28. 4 *Faraday* . the great nineteenth century English scientist.

Page 29. 1 *Sir J. C Bose* the famous Bengali scientist who died in 1938.

Page 33. 21. 'progressing' cf. what Russell has to say on this

IV LEARNING TO FLY

Page 35 2 *Marshall* the flying instructor

3 *helmet* the now familiar airman's headcovering

4 *taxied* ran along the ground into position for taking off.

Page 36 1 *the stick* the control stick, placed between the legs, which operates direction Instruction machines have 'dual control', i.e., two sticks working together so that if the learner in his seat makes a mistake the instructor behind him can correct it

4 *tube* speaking tube, the instruction being to race his engine so that it doesn't stop

8 *bounce* a good landing is perfectly smooth

12 *am bored* I am tired of saying 'sorry'

17 *go solo* : go up without the instructor, the final test

Page 37 16 *overshoot* not give room for the long run after landing

Page 38. 16 *A S I* Air Signal Indicator, which shows wind direction

Page 41 24 *YZ* . the aeroplane, referred to by its class letters

Page 42. 2-3 *willow bat* cricket

21 *cheese-cutter* a control in the cockpit of an aeroplane used to keep the machine evenly balanced

V. HAPPINESS IN THIS MODERN WORLD

Page 44. 1 *Wells's* a novel by H G Wells

Page 45. 2 *Middle Ages* i.e., see what Europe was like six hundred years ago in odd corners of India, and so of the eighteenth century in China

3 *Washington* the American patriot and first President of the U S A

13 *Chinese Republic* this essay was published in 1928

27 1914 when the Great War broke out in Europe

Page 49 1 *Sermon* contains the essence of the teachings of Christ Bible *Matthew*, chs v—vii

Page 50. 4 *Mormonism* is American

12 '*Render unto Cæsar*' i.e., pay your taxes Bible *Matthew*, ch xxii, 21

16-17 *keep them end up* struggle successfully for existence

Page 53. 13 *imprisoning* the writer was once imprisoned for his political opinions

VI ABOUT READING

Page 59 1 *experimental reading* in the chapter which precedes this Bennett discussed the question 'Where to Begin' and said 'You must begin with an acknowledged classic, you must eschew modern works. The reason why you must avoid modern works at the beginning is simply that you are not in a position to choose among modern works. Nobody at all is quite in a position to choose with certainty among modern works. To sift the wheat from the chaff is a process that takes an exceedingly long time.' Then he comes to the kernel of the reason for experimenting with a classic—'If you differ from a classic, it is you who are wrong, and not the book.'

9 *classic* the word has many meanings, here it implies a work which has been accepted after the passage of time as being a great piece of literature.

Page 60. 1 *man behind the book* Bennett is too sweeping, there is no need to know the man behind a drama But Lamb is an essayist and the final joy of the essay is the man behind it So what follows in the text is pre-eminently true of the essayist

12 *orally* poems were recited, not read

22 *Dictionary* usually referred to as the D N B, a great work in many volumes containing lives of all great English men and women Canon Ainger did a great deal of work on Lamb

26 *E. V Lucas* essayist, humorist, editor of Lamb d 1938 a great figure in his day in London

Page 61. 11 *nearing fifty* Lamb was 45 when the first of the Essays of Elia was published in 1820. *Dream Children* was published in 1822

Page 62. 16 *Bridget* Mary Lamb, his sister, who wrote with him Lamb's *Tables from Shakespeare*

23-4 *part of the machinery* the word is used in literature to refer to the means used to gain effects. here the creation of the children is 'machinery' to enhance the effect of loneliness

Page 65. 4 *super-eminently caused* hard words to drive home his meaning—'which is caused more than anything else by taking part in high emotion in such a way as to make it alive and so increase the life in us

VII ABOUT WRITING

Page 66 1 *Mr Justice Shallow* in Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*

Page 67 8. *Morning Post* since incorporated in *The Daily Telegraph*

10 *Mr Lloyd George* premier of the Coalition Cabinet during and just after the War of 1914-18

16 *leal dervishes* here means absolutely loyal followers.

17 *churchwarden* a layman who has duties connected with the parish church The author shows how absurd the journalist's sentence is when taken literally

25 *Mr Charles Chaplin* the famous comedian on the films,

then at the height of his popularity Films give actors a very wide fame

29 *Horatio Bottomley* a journalist and demagogue, whose financial games had just then been exposed

Page 68. 2 *Greek* the culture of ancient Greece taught a sane moderation

10. *pamphleteer* as we discover below, is Mr Shaw Some say he is an even greater pamphleteer than playwright—or that in his plays he is a great pamphleteer

21. *Huxley* Professor T H Huxley, the great Victorian scientist, grandfather of the brothers whose work appears in this volume

Page 69. 3 *Juvenal* Latin satirical poet of the early Empire

6 *Swift* greatest satirist in English Author of *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) in which this quotation appears

11 *Leader* in the party system of the House of Commons the leader of the strongest minority party is Leader of the Opposition

Page 70. 4. *Not 'arf* : not half, meaning 'absolutely'

24 *casting your bread* a figure of speech from the Bible, meaning that often by throwing things away great gain comes

Page 71 7. *wise pirate* : Long John Silver in *Treasure Island*

28 *Apollo* : a handsome Greek god

Page 72. 4 *Jowett* best known as the translator of Plato's *Dialogues*

25 *Morley* . well-known critic and biographer Secretary of State for India, 1905-10

26 *the irony* when a literal statement is made its exactness often makes the writer appear ironic

27 *Quakerish* the Quakers are a religious sect who lay particular emphasis on literal statement

VIII ABOUT BACTERIA

Page 77. 3 *evolution* the process whereby new species of living things arise as a result of very small changes which take place in generation after generation

5 *bacterial level* bacteria are matter organized in a very simple way, just as we are matter organized in a very complex way. These, simple organizations were evolved early in the earth's life story.

Page 78. 2 *in the economy* i.e. they are important to the whole arrangement of Nature.

4 *tiny organisms* all our knowledge of them depends on the microscope.

Page 79. 28 *liquid air* cool air sufficiently and it becomes liquid.

Page 80. 27 *into wine* when bacteria breed in fruit juices they cause chemical changes in the juice, producing from it such substances as alcohol with many others.

Page 83. 29 *nitrate content* nitrogen causes fertility in the soil as it is necessary to all plant life. In India the nitrate content is usually adequate in the upper few inches of the soil only, so we see very light ploughing or mere scratching of the soil in preparation for sowing, whereas in many other countries deep ploughing is done as the nitrate content goes deeper.

Page 84. 25-6 *cosmically diaphanous* diaphanous means extremely thin and is applied usually to materials like muslin and cobwebs. Here the writer means that in comparison with the diameter of the earth (8,000 miles) the eight-foot thick surface layer in which life exists seems to be 'diaphanous'.

IX ABOUT BIRDS

Page 88. 5 *economy* here means 'arrangement', but cf. Notes on Cobbett.

8 *master-ley* opens all doors, so here means 'the essential idea'.

8 *evolution* see note on 'Bacteria' above.

Page 89. 6 *Upper Cretaceous* *Jurassic* geologists describe different layers of the earth's surface which have become successively buried, and these are two of them. They are able to tell within wide limits the number of years ago that each of these layers formed the uppermost stratum and for how long each was exposed. By examining the remains of birds and animals found buried in these layers they can tell us something

of the creatures which existed all these thousands and millions of years ago,

Page 90 14 *mammals* the class containing all those types of animals which suckle their young

Page 91. 19 *laws of aerodynamics* we all know that the ability of any body to float or swim in a liquid depends upon the relationship between its weight on the one hand and its size and shape on the other. In the same way there are rules which govern whether anything, living or not living, can or cannot rise in the air. These rules relate to the size, shape and weight of the body, the density of the atmosphere, and the power, if any, which can be used by the body to lift and move itself. The rules which govern the relationships of these things are constant and are called the laws of aerodynamics. To take one simple example a very broad thing, say a sheet of stiff paper, may be lifted high in the air by a light breeze, while something of the same weight, but of a different shape, say the same piece of paper screwed up into a tight ball, would remain lying on the ground.

28 *Mr Haldane* distinguished scientist, Professor in the University of London

Page 92 2 *sternum* the breast bone

22 *the division of the heart* in the less highly developed animals the heart is in the form of a single tube, and this primitive condition is also found in the early stages of the development of the young among the higher species. But in these higher species the fully developed heart consists of four chambers, two on the right and two on the left, which have little or no communication with each other. By means of this arrangement, the oxygenated blood which comes from the lungs does not mix with the used-up blood which comes from the rest of the body. And the oxygenated blood is sent to the far parts of the body while the used-up blood is sent to the lungs to be re-oxygenated. In primitive types and in the embryos of higher types during development, because there is no division into right and left in the heart, the oxygenated and unoxygenated blood mixes and the mixture is sent partly to the lungs and partly all over the body, which is obviously wasteful and less efficient.

Page 93. 4-5 *vital chemistry* we all know how quick and nervous birds are. Behind this speed and frequency of movement is the speed of their vital chemistry. Vital chemistry consists in the processes which keep the machinery of our bodies in action. The machinery is always moving, even when we rest, e.g. our blood must flow for us to live. The fuel for our elaborate machinery is supplied by food and oxygen. In every living thing, animal or vegetable, chemical changes are continuously taking place. The complicated substances of the body are broken down into simpler components, and simpler substances such as oxygen, calcium, water and many others, are built up into more complicated ones to take the place of those which have been used. As a general rule the breaking down of a substance produces energy, while the building up uses energy. This energy produced by breakdown appears in the living body partly as heat, and partly as the work required for the activities of heart, brain or muscle, or is used up again in the chemical processes which rebuild used tissues or expel poisonous or unwanted substances from the body. These changes can take place more rapidly at high temperatures. A creature with rapid vital chemistry lives and can move more rapidly than one with a slow vital chemistry. The extraordinary quickness about a bird is the visible sign of its rapid vital chemistry.

15 *Arctic lands* with our birds, the Himalayan snows

Page 94. 22 *Tertiary Epoch*. see Note above on Cretaceous.

Page 97. 18-19 *beauties of the countryside*. as the author says later, 'England is getting so crowded', and much of the beautiful countryside is being ruined by ugly houses and factories, just as brick kilns very often deface the approach to a modern Indian city. In a small country what remains of natural beauty is very valuable.

Page 99. 25-6 *waste oil*. I have seen people on the coast of Yorkshire taking these poor birds and cleaning their plumage so that they can fly again.

X ABOUT ANIMALS

Page 104. 15 *Hampton Court* the palace and park near London. People try to thread the maze for amusement, and

when they are tired they can ask a keeper the way to the centre or the way out

XI ULTIMA THULE

Page 111. 1 *Ultima Thule* Thule was an island in the northern seas mentioned by old Greek navigators. It was a place of snow and ice, and day and night lasted six months alternately. The name means 'the furthest off place'. On 'a winter night', possibly of storm and rain, such a place would come to mind.

4 *Kensington Gardens* one of the parks in London

Page 112. 1 *the birds* the birds in such gardens in England grow very tame and soon grow friendly enough to perch on one's arms and shoulders

6 *hard put to it* worn out; or possibly, too small for her.

10 *garbed*. rather unusual word for 'dressed'

11 *daverdy* 'dialect word meaning 'faded'

14 *tried to join with* neither shoes nor gaiters would quite cover the ankles

21 *pursed* 'pressed together'

28 *Serpentine* lake in Hyde Park extending to Kensington Gardens.

Page 113. 21 *pipchinesque* see Dickens' novel *Dombey and Son*, chapter 8 — 'This celebrated Mrs Pipchin was a marvellous ill-favoured, ill-conditioned old lady, of a stooping figure, with a mottled face, like hard marble, a hock nose, and a hard grey eye, that looked as if it might have been hammered at on an anvil without sustaining any injury'

23 *crow's-feet* the name given to the lines in the skin running from the corners of the eyes, which are a sign of age

27 *Harmony Theatre* an invented name. Before amplifiers and gramophones every theatre had its orchestra, seated just before and below the stage

Page 114. 11 *Kingston* on the edge of London

Page 115. 23 *exciting the derision* this idea of the old man being laughed at by everybody is the motive of the sketch.

Galsworthy drew sketch after sketch of these odd human beings, lonely and lost in a strange world.

29 *strays* strayed homeless animals

Page 116 11 *Moronelli* musical people usually adopted Italian names as the Italians were supposed to be a wonderfully musical people

16 *so successful* . show the wealth of the owners

18 *grubby* dirty, the mother being the streets 'where all the house-fronts seem so successful'

Page 117. 5 *give you notice* of his intention to give up his rooms

14 *tries me* wears out my patience

18 *answer bells* she had no servant and in an English town the bell rings all day mostly with tradesmen and salesmen.

19 *Scottish desire* possibly a little hard on that worthy people, it is a general human weakness to find good reasons for having done anything

20 *all promontories* a sharp-featured, hard face The Scots are a hard people and suffer much from a bleak east wind from the North Sea

23 *Goodness knows* a familiar idiom, meaning here 'It is difficult to say what he has and what he has not got up there'

Page 120 2 *tears gather* now we see her kindly affection for the old man without such a reason she would never have kept him

16 *mews* a relic of coaching days, when rich people had their stables near their town houses

Page 121. 2 *knew a good thing* colloquial, meaning he saw he would get more by waiting

9 *a-right* this and 'I let him' for 'I shall let him show that the bear leader was a foreigner speaking the language imperfectly

26 *allowed the privilege* of paying for their dinner, and for them the little man has no hesitation in accepting money

23 *cod* a large coarse fish whose head would weigh half a seer

Page 122. 19. *consciences* always worrying about whether they are acting rightly and yet grumbling because they are so conscientious.

28 *Scottish temperament* in this aspect, a slave to a harsh moral sense

29 *her descent*. a reference to the successfulness of the Scot in London.

Page 125. 14 *black coat* - there follows a description of clothes which show that the new character is a successful theatrical manager.

26-7 *can't get at me*. you cannot persuade me to give you a thing.

Page 126. 2 *charge yourself* make yourself responsible for the care of

6 *kick it* colloquialism 'to kick the bucket' meaning 'to die',

12. *quid* pounds sterling

14 *shop* theatre

17 *look after number one* look after himself

23. *rocky time* financially unsound

Page 127. 1 *mug* vulgarism for 'face'

10. *turn him* : dissuade him

15. *on the rocks* without money

28. *Wimbledon* : suburb of London where there are big houses.

Page 129. 1 *sphinxes* like the Sphinx, silently, for ever watching

Page 131. 21 *distingué* distinguished part of the man's vulgarity to use unnecessarily the French form

25-6 *laid out a goodish bit* I have spent a lot of money on it The irony is in the cheerless, comfortless atmosphere of the house, like the dreary idea of the uttermost island 'Ultima Thule', despite the money lavished on it The cats preferred Moronelli's poverty, because kindness and sympathy were there too The twist whereby Mr Jackson has interpreted the name as giving distinction to his house is doubly ironical.

XII MR STRENBERRY'S TALE

Page 133. 1 *landlady* of the inn

2 *mechanical* . without effort , habitual

3 *one shilling* the change from the two-shilling piece given to pay for the beer

6 *bit early* the bar of the village inn is a regular meeting place of an evening There is usually a Public Bar and a Private one where more superior visitors sit

Page 134. 1 *reg'lar* a regular customer , and by 'a bit too reg'lar' she implies that Mr Strenberry spent too much time there

12 *delighted whisper* . landladies are by no means free from the human love of gossip

Page 135. 1 *draw him out* get him to talk

9 *tapped her forehead* thus indicating that Mr Strenberry was going mad

18-19 *half-pints* the normal drink of beer

Page 136 13 *Highlanders* on advertisement posters

25 *more fools* from his judgement of others we learn something of the man—that he is lonely for lack of suitable society.

Page 137. 2-3 *made a pretence* he has grown interested in Mr Strenberry and means to study him, so he finds an excuse for sitting on

15 *It's a farce* he means the compulsory education the villagers have received has been a farce because they do not respect him and what he says

19 *giving the wink* winking at one another as much as to say 'Here is that queer fellow'

22 *I objected* I gently disagreed with this gloomy view of things

29 *They wouldn't because* read 'They wouldn't be queer because'

Page 138 8 *expectantly* hoping that this remark would make him tell his story

28 *doomsday* the day of doom or judgement upon which, according to the Christians, the souls of the dead arise and are

judged and according to the judgement spend eternity in pleasure or pain

Page 139. 17 *shut him up* stop him from telling me any more

Page 140. 9 *flickering* similar to a mirage

22-8. *one piece of glass* sheets of glass laid upon one another become visible

Page 141. 7 *litter of pigs* this is the only glimpse of the setting we are given during Mr Strenberry's tale—a very homely subject gives contrast to the kind of story we are listening to

Page 143. 4 *microbes* it is suggested that the man comes from a world in which microbes are not allowed to exist so he would have no resistance to them, any more than we had to influenza in 1919.

19 *Wells* Mr Wells has written more than one book about the future, e.g. *A Modern Utopia*, *The Time Machine*

Page 144. 19 *Everything was finished* the world was coming to an end

Page 147. 18-19 *pinch of salt*. the idiom is 'You can take that with a pinch of salt', meaning the statement is exaggerated or untrue

XIII. MR ODDY

Page 148 4. *romantic* already old enough to belong to an age of romance

Page 149 9 *Chelsea* the corner of London where the artists live

11 '*The Good Intent*' a restaurant Chelsea still has these little teashops, overlooking the river

14 *Whistler's* the great painter painted this bridge, and his picture of it is so famous that the writer calls it *his* bridge

20 *Cambridge* from the University He had come to live and work there, but the only employment he had was as a reviewer, a critic of books, a very insufficient job, but he had youthful confidence

Page 150 21 *the future was theirs* that is the difference between the old England and the England since the War Then, life and success seemed certain, today, all is uncertainty

22 *pathetic* for the War was going to overtake them all
 Page 151. 13-14 *severest criticism* because every young writer likes to be thought to be writing in an entirely new way

25 *A B C shop* cheap restaurants in London Dozens of them are dotted over the huge area of the city

Page 152. 24 *all was fish* . the metaphor means that he enjoyed whatever came along without discriminating

25-6 *Thackeray and Dickens* great Victorian novelists

27. *Radcliffe* a novelist, forgotten by all but students, who wrote exciting and terrifying tales at the end of the eighteenth century

27 *Barham* wrote that very popular book of light verse, *The Ingoldsby Legends*

28 *Galt* a Scots novelist at the time of Scott Wrote about the humble life of industrial workers in Ayrshire

28 *Colburn's novelists* a collection of great novels published in a uniform edition

Page 153. 1 *a first Gray's Elegy* . a first edition of Gray's famous poem, or of Defoe's romance, In those days fantastic prices were paid for first editions

9 *dead almost* the usual phrase for this is 'to fall still-born from the press'

11 *browsed* literally used of animals, gently, persistently eating grass—and transferred to describe the placidity of people reading books in a library

12 *stack* piles of books

23 '*How do you do?*' the formal greeting in English The correct reply is the same formula of words, and *not* something like 'Very well, thank you'.

26 "*Nineties*" the last decade of the last century, a familiar word in literary circles because of the frequent discussion of the unique work done then

Page 154 10 *en brosse* a French phrase meaning 'straight on end' and so, close cut

19-20 *pepper-and-salt* an indeterminate colour like a mixture of these condiments then fashionable for trousers

Page 155. 11-12 *one's own youth* the old gentleman's youth would be three decades before the Nineties

16-17 *George Eliot* her best known novel, *Adam Bede*, was published in 1850.

19 *the God* · the writer whom you all worship

25 *Hardy* · born 1840 · Novelist and poet (till about 1900) and later, poet only till his death in 1928

Page 156. 16. *patronizing* to condescend to the old gentleman's ignorance

22 *duffer* the usual slang phrase is 'old duffer' which means 'old and dull person'

Page 157 6. *for one thing* artists are very sensitive to people's opinions and their parties are often mutual admiration societies So Tommy is hurt by Russell

19 *written out* having nothing left to say

24 *Adonis* beautiful young Greek god, and so any beautiful young man.

Page 158. 5 *imagined to be sleepless* according to the legend that unhappy lovers cannot sleep

13. *making it up* the usual phrase for ending a quarrel.

25 *The Lion* students are always publishing new journals mostly of poetry and they all die soon

27. *Essay Club* Literary and Debating Societies are as mushroomlike in their growth in Universities as journals A few are old and famous, the one Stevenson belonged to in Edinburgh and celebrated in an essay still flourishes

Page 159. 9 *liquorice drops* a pungent form of sweetmeat, very cheap

12 *apology was necessary* for monopolizing the conversation on his private affairs

Page 160. 19 *none of his nonsense* · referring to his possessive air—it is clear already that she loves him no more

27-8 *affection. . . curiosity* the one stirred the other

Page 161. 16-17 *secretly gave Tommy* who was now jealous of Russell and glad to hear of some one who had never heard of him.

17 *Mumpus* all the names are imaginary in the story, being either very ordinary like Brown and Smith, or invented, like Oddy and Galleor

Page 162 16 *out of place* he would not fit in to that group of people, a sarcastic commentary on the group as the identity of Mr Oddy later shows

25 *futuristic* a school of painting that flourished briefly at that time

28 *gave no trouble* here means, gave her niece no social embarrassment

Page 163 2-3 *excellent talk* ironical as is obvious from the next sentence

8 *like ninepins* a game in which pieces of wood like small Indian clubs are knocked over from a distance by rolling wooden balls at them

22 *in the swim* here means to agree with the group, and usually to be regularly associated with a group and so know what is going on

25 *almshouse* in English law the poor who cannot support themselves can be kept in almshouses run by the state

Page 164. 2-3 *piping treble* high-pitched voice.

28-9 *cabbage beef* kitchen smells lingering everywhere.

Page 169. 14 *editions de luxe* expensively printed and bound editions

15 *rare first editions* the craze is referred to earlier

16 *white parchment and vellum* very expensive fashion of that time

Page 170. 12 *nobody tells me the truth* presumably about his own work

XIV ADVICE TO VILLAGERS

Page 173. 1 *Economy* Ruskin's definition in *Unto This Last* may profitably be compared with Cobbett's remarks The word is Greek for 'house law' or, as the writer says, 'management'

Page 174. 29 *doctrines preaches* Christianity preaches poverty, and many modern thinkers, like Cobbett, hint that this valuable teaching has been twisted so that the poor will accept the squalor of poverty and not its fineness Cobbett suggests more than once in his passage that religion has been used to keep the poor contented while the rich exploit them.

Page 175. 23. *different ranks* Shows that despite the last note Cobbett is not a socialist

29 *sweat of their brow* true then, but in industrialized countries no longer true Machines do the work Men have still to learn to distribute the results

Page 176. 10-11 *paper-money* attacked also by Burke The introduction of new currency often affects markets, and the poor suffer The system of course works well in India and England today.

16 *Better times* this was written 1821-2 when all classes were still feeling the effects of the wars with Napoleon The better times did come. indeed, the peasant's lot has steadily become better

27 *roast beef* he names two typical English dishes

29 *refinements of sickly minds* Cobbett is a great realist, and tests good government by solid material comforts

Page 177. 5 *false weights* have disappeared from England now

15-17 "*little children*" from the Bible Everyone knew the Bible in those days, so the popular pamphleteer could safely quote from it

27-8 *act the part*: i.e. look after their poor relations

Page 178. 7 *education* there was great interest in education at this time and much writing of books for children But it is well to remember that education did not become compulsory in England until 1870 The word really means by derivation 'to lead out', i.e. to develop the brain What follows is very like the most advanced thought in India today on the subject

21 *after, and not before* this would be too late

Page 179 1-2 *wasteful public expenditure* on fighting Napoleon

XV DREAM CHILDREN

Page 180 3 *conception of* imagining what they were like

3 *traditionary* whom they knew by tradition (story) only

6 *great-grandmother Field* Lamb's grandmother, Mary Field, was for fifty years housekeeper in 'the great house' at Blakesware, Hertfordshire

7 *Norfolk* Lamb constantly blended truth and fiction. He changes the country here because the same family which his grandmother served owned the house when he wrote. He probably makes it Norfolk because the ballad is about Norfolk.

12 *ballad* a simple form of poem for story-telling. This one is a very poor specimen, but will be found in *The Oxford Book of Ballads*, p. 854.

Page 181. 1 *cruel uncle* after their parents' death, the uncle who had promised to look after them

bargain'd with two ruffians strong,

Which were of furious mood,

That they should take these children young,

And slay them in a wood

4 *Robin Redbreasts* No burial this pretty pair

Of any man receives,

Till Robin Redbreast piously

Did cover them with leaves

16-17 *in a manner* *in a sort* old-fashioned phrases not now used. The latter means 'to some extent'.

21 *other house* there really was a newer house, built four miles away.

23 *old tombs* *Abbey* Westminster Abbey is cluttered with old tombs. 'Cluttered' is a word used of useless or ugly things—many of the tombs are very ugly.

24 *tawdry* showy and nasty

28 *gentry* landowners of great family

Page 182 4 *Psaltery* Book of Psalms in the Old Testament

5 *Testament* the New Testament or 'New Promise' of God to man, according to the Christians, which forms the second part of the Bible.

5 *spread her hands* expressing astonishment. Feats of memory of this kind are not so common in the West as here.

17 *apparition* ghost

28 *busts* sculptures of head and shoulders

29 *twelve Cæsars* the first twelve Emperors of Rome from Augustus to Domitian, the first reigning nearly 2,000 years ago

Page 183. 17 *orangery* a glass-roofed building, artificially heated, for the growing of oranges in that cold climate

23-4. *impertinent friskings* unnecessary fitting to and fro

24 *busy-idle* engrossing and useless Sounds a contradiction, and such phrases have the name 'oxymoron'.

26 *baits* attractions

Page 184. 5 *John L—* John Lamb, the writer's brother, who had recently died when this pathetic essay was written

9 *imp* expressive word, really a kind of fairy, and implies a small boy very full of energy

Page 185 15-16 *Alice W—n* Alice Winterton, the feigned name by which he alludes to his early love, Ann Simmons, the 'Anna' in his sonnets

29 *Bartrum* Miss Simmons married a Mr Bartrum

Page 186 2 *Lethe*. Greek mythology, the river over which spirits passed into the country of the after life. Drinking its waters brought entire forgetfulness of the past The idea of spirits waiting there for incarnation comes from Plato

6 *Bridget* Mary Lamb, the sister with whom he wrote *Tales from Shakespeare* and whom he cherished through the sad days of her insanity

XVI THE FIGHT

Boxing has always been a favourite English sport and a favourite subject for stories There are great fights in Borrow's *Lavengro*, Meredith's *Amazing Marriage* and Conan Doyle's *Rodney Stone*

This fight took place—in the open air as was then usual—in 1821 Tom Hickman was called 'gas-light man' from his trade A boxing book of the time describes him as 'a second Hotspur—impatient—fiery—daring—hardy—impetuous' He had a great reputation as a fighter but unfortunately he was a boaster Bill Neate was a butcher, a great fighter, and like the best of them, very

modest He was nearly 6 feet tall and weighed 13 stone 7 lb. against his opponent's 5 foot 9½ inches and 11 stone 1½ lb

Page 188. 6 *Between the acting* *Julius Cæsar*, II, 1, 63-5

17 *cockneys* poorer Londoners who unlike the fashionable swells', could not afford to travel 66 miles to see a boxing match

23 *threw his hat* the customary gesture then to express readiness to fight

Page 189 6 *Ajax*: Greek hero at Troy, second only to Achilles in size.

9-10 *with Atlantean shoulders* *Paradise Lost*, II, 306

11 *Bristol* Neate's native place

12 *Diomed* another Greek hero at Troy

Page 190 24 'grinned horrible' *Paradise Lost*, II, 846

Page 191 11 *petit-maître*ship: dancing master antics

22-3 'like two clouds' *Paradise Lost*, II, 714-16

Page 192 13 *Dante*. the medieval Italian poet who wrote a great epic of a vision of Hell, Purgatory and Heaven

Page 193 10 *Pretty well*. quoted as a typically English understatement See the passage from C E Montague

10 *carrier pigeons* then the speediest way of sending news

XVII WALKING TOURS

Page 194. 5 *canting dilettantes* to cant is to use popular catchwords or ideas without finding out what they mean; a dilettante is a dabbler in any art, so the phrase is a strong way of saying 'stupid trifler' Ruskin wrote about the spoiling of scenery by railways

7. *of the brotherhood* the sharers of a mystery, here the joys of walking

8 *humours* emotions, sensations, a word with a fine history

Page 195. 9 *they do not play off* they are extremists, they are incapable of mixing pleasures

13 *curacao* like all liqueurs should be drunk sip by sip and savoured on the tongue, a *brown John* is a large vessel, used for beer, which is drunk lavishly

22-3 *night cap* anything drunk at bedtime to still the brain and assist sleeping

Page 196. 5 *freedom* : read it 'freedom is of the essence of it'.

28. *Christian* the hero of *Pilgrim's Progress* who at the beginning of his journey had a heavy pack on his back, symbolizing his sins, which later he was able to throw off

Page 197. 8 *Abudah* a merchant, in a story by Ridley, who was haunted by an old hag till he mended his evil ways

19-20 *at his loom* his brain is working to find words for what he sees

Page 198 7 *clown* simple countryman, as in Shakespeare

7 *sedentary* sitting, who cannot imagine walking for pleasure, the tramp having a purpose, to beg or steal

Page 199. 10 *epicure* here means he is fastidious about his food

Page 200. 2 *the great barons* a metaphor from the feudal system. The king owned all the land and gave it out to barons to look after in return for military service. The trumpet 'rallied' men to the 'standard', the flag which marked the king's presence. The idea is that exercise stills all kinds of thought

17 *articles* referring back to the man who puts what he sees into words

23 *bivouacs* cf. a night bivouac in the famous chapter 'A Night among the Pines' in Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey*

Page 201. 5 *millennium* the coming golden age. Here and in the next sentence Stevenson plays with the idea of escaping from time. In England, where punctuality is a necessary virtue in a vivid and complicated society, time becomes a tyrant, a 'misery' as he says later

14 *fête* the use of the French word for festival shows he is thinking of a French village

Page 202. 1 *Milton* the quotation is from his tract *Areopagitica* (1644).

15 *grog* spirits and water, usually hot

23 *nicest coincidence* his ideas are pleasant because they are exactly one's own This is the correct sense of 'nice'

Page 203 5-6 *Tristram Shandy* almost more than the other books mentioned is to be read 'by fits and starts' and lingered over *Héloïse* is a novel by Rousseau, full of a renewed joy in life as are Heine's songs

12 *audacious* because it comes from 'Jove', the name of the Father of the gods

19 *curiosity* in the fine sense of inquiring, not the mean one of prying

21 *provincial* of the provinces, i.e. country, the phrase therefore meaning 'country manners'

26 *Burns* I hae been blythe wi' comrades dear,
I hae been merry drinkin',
I hae been joyfu' gath'rin' gear
I hae been happy thinkin'

Page 204 13 *despise silence* cf. Wordsworth, 'Intimations of Immortality'

Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence

28 *social heresy* revolt against what society accepts as true.

Page 205 4 *Philistines* Arnold's name for the middle classes whose one idea was to 'gather gear'

11 *reeking* Scots for 'smoking'

13 *seventh circle* there were seven circles mounting upwards in an old Christian idea of heaven, so the phrase means, 'in the highest degree contented'.

XVIII THE RICH AND THE POOR

Page 206 4 *sea-flat land* only divided from the sea by the sands over which the tide rises

7 *flitted* a word used of 'swift light' insects

Page 207. 5 *the year too* August, the end of summer, when the twilight might be two hours long

10 *mysterious sadness* she was like a creature from another world, for unlike him she had no hope or joy in life

23 *samphur* a plant which grows on rocks near the sea, whose fleshy leaves are used in making pickles

Page 208. 4 *I prolonged* the short paragraph makes a break before the contrasting descriptions It explains his fascination by those eyes so that he lingered

28 *Conquest* the Norman Conquest in 1066

Page 209. 27 *The agent* the estate agent

Page 210. 24 *captive bird* Hudson was a great lover of birds and animals and his memorial in a great London park is surrounded by a bird sanctuary

Page 211. 6. *salting* marsh land overflowed by the sea

14 '*sloth of the eye*' laziness He refuses to see them, for if he did he could not express them in his painting

26 *Strand* he names three of the busiest streets in London.

